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# A CAREER PLANNING GUIDE



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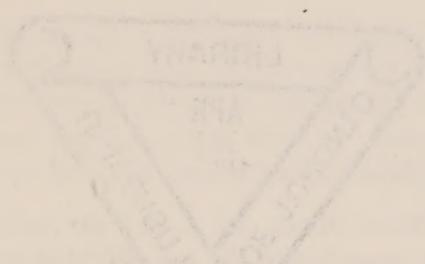
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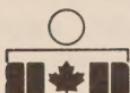
# A CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

by

Catherine V. Davison

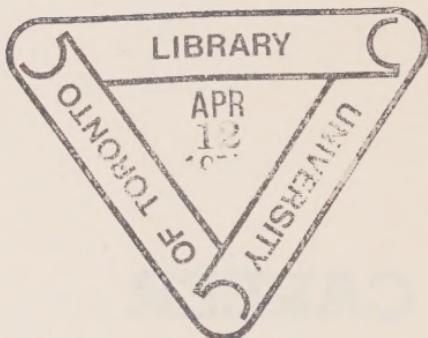
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L. Glen Tippett



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## TO THE STUDENT

Perhaps you have been thinking about becoming a plumber. Or perhaps you have no goals in mind at all. In either case, this book doesn't tell you what plumbers and other workers do. Rather, it describes some of the processes involved in making life's decisions.

For example, you will notice that we talk a lot about getting to know yourself. Why do we do this? We do this simply because you need to know what you want and what you are capable of doing in order to make satisfying choices.

You will also notice that we talk a lot about thoroughly exploring the many opportunities available to you. Why do we do this? Again, we do this simply because you can't choose something if you don't know that it exists. And you are more likely to make satisfying choices if you have a broad range of alternatives to consider.

Finally, you will notice that we talk a lot about decision making strategies themselves. For example, we talk about ways of resolving conflicts when different alternatives are attractive for different reasons. We also talk about ways of resolving conflicts when you have to choose among several equally attractive or equally unattractive courses of action. Using a good strategy for weighing your alternatives reduces the likelihood of an unsatisfying outcome.

In total, what we are trying to do in this book is to help you prepare for some of the decisions facing you now and in the future. Naturally, a number of these decisions relate to education and work but there are also others. For example, you will be making choices about friends, how to spend your leisure time, and where to live. Taken together, these choices will one day contribute to the story of your life — or your career.

Now, this career that you have can be one of two kinds. It can be one in which you have many opportunities for choice at each new stage in life. Or it can be one in which you have few opportunities for choice. Much will depend on the amount of time and effort you are willing to put into planning for the future.

Catherine V. Davison  
L. Glen Tippett

January, 1976.

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# CHAPTER ONE



**OVERVIEW  
OF CAREER PLANNING**

The word "career" is not new to you. You have seen it used on pamphlets in the school counsellor's office and library. You have seen bulletin boards covered with posters describing career opportunities. You have seen sections in the newspaper devoted to careers. You have heard people discussing their careers in everyday conversations. And from all the things you have seen and heard, you have formed your own ideas about what a career is. You have also probably formed some ideas about what career planning involves.

For example, you might think that a career describes the kind of work a person does on a regular basis. You might think that only professional persons such as doctors and lawyers have careers. You might think that it is desirable to have a career and undesirable not to have one.

Similarly, you might think that career planning involves deciding what you will do for the rest of your life. You might think that it is a one-shot activity that you do when you are finishing school. You might think that career planning is useful for people with great work ambitions and useless for those without great ambitions.

This chapter defines the word "career" as it is used in this book. It also presents a brief outline of the major career planning activities that will be described in later chapters. As you read the ideas presented here, compare them with the ones that you have. Also try to answer these questions: (1) Do I really believe that it is important to plan for the future? (2) Am I prepared to devote enough time and effort to career planning to make it a worthwhile project?

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Many people use the words "job", "occupation", and "career" to mean the same thing. Perhaps you do as well. But this can lead to confusion and misunderstanding, particularly when you are facing decisions about what to do with your life. In this book, each of these words is used to mean something different.

First of all, the word "job" is used to refer to the position a person holds in a company, factory, institution or organization. Teaching biology at F.R. Davis Memorial High School is an example of a job.

The word "occupation" is used to refer to a group of similar jobs. An example of an occupation would be secondary school teaching.

The word "career" is used to refer to the course a person takes

as s/he progresses through life. A person's career may include a variety of jobs and a number of different occupations. It may include a variety of educational and training experiences. It may include marriage and raising a family. It may also include professional and volunteer activities, leisure activities, hobbies, sports activities, travel and the like. Perhaps the biographies and autobiographies of outstanding persons provide the clearest examples of what a career is like.

Now think about this description of a career for a few minutes. If it is broader than the one you would have given, it should also change some of your ideas about career planning.

For one thing, you should now realize that career planning can never be a one-shot activity. Rather, it must be one that begins early in life and continues through the years of your old age. You should also realize that it involves preparation for not one but hundreds of decisions. Many of these decisions may be related to education and work, but personal choices regarding your lifestyle are involved as well. What you may not realize, perhaps, is the importance of career planning in determining what your future will be like. This is the subject of the next section.

## INDIVIDUAL OPTIONS AND CAREER PLANNING

As they go through life, some people have more options or opportunities for choice than others. For example, persons with many options can choose from several places of residence. They can choose several ways of spending a substantial portion of their incomes. They can choose from among several occupations. Persons with less options have fewer opportunities for choice. They may be restricted to living in a small home or apartment. They may be forced to spend most of their limited incomes on food, shelter and clothing. They may be forced to accept whatever jobs they can find because they have few saleable skills.

Probably you would say that people with many options available to them are just "plain lucky". And you might be right — or at least partly right. There does have to be something "lucky" about inheriting the right combination of personal characteristics. There does have to be something "lucky" about being raised in an environment where there are many opportunities for personal growth and development. There does have to be something "lucky" about being in the right place at the right time. As a matter of fact,

it would be a serious mistake to overlook the role that luck, fate or whatever you wish to call it plays in people's lives. But rarely is this the whole story.

How many times have you heard people despairing about things they did or did not do in the past? "If only I had completed school." "If only I had not entered the family trucking business." "If only I had postponed my plans to marry until I had finished my training". These are the cries of people who have already made important career decisions. They now see that their options are severely limited, but feel that there is no turning back. Indeed, they may not be able to reverse their earlier decisions unless they are willing to make compromises in other aspects of their lives.

Many reasons could be given to explain the present situations of the people described here. Perhaps they didn't realize that the decisions they were making would have more than immediate consequences. They might even have chosen the best alternative available to them at that time. But in most cases, one reason stands out from all of the others. They did not look ahead and prepare themselves for those times in life when important decisions must be made.

For what happens when you are unprepared to make a decision? A number of unfortunate things can happen. First, you may find that you have only two or three options from which to choose because your knowledge of possible alternatives is so limited. Second, you may find that you have to base your decision on superficial things because you have not had time to consider what you really want and what you are capable of doing. Third, you may find that you have to rely heavily on the advice of others in making your decision.

Taken together, these three things can hardly contribute to your making a wise choice. And later, as you try to implement your decision, you may flounder. You may fail. You may be unhappy. You may feel that you no longer have control of your life. But like the people described above, you will likely have to live with the consequences.

Now, career planning does not guarantee that all problems and difficulties you encounter in the future will be solved satisfactorily. Nor does it guarantee that decision-making will be any easier. However, it can help you in many other ways.

First, career planning can help you prepare to make decisions. When you know what your next important decision is going to be,

you are able to see what kind of information you need to gather in order to make a wise choice. For example, suppose that you have decided to take a welding course. What is your next decision going to be? Obviously, it will be to decide where you will take this training. So you will need to collect information on schools offering welding courses.

Second, career planning can help you develop more confidence in yourself. When you know what you want from life and where you are going, you are bound to feel more secure than you will if you are just drifting along. To understand this point, you need only to think about the anxiety caused by your parents, friends and others whenever they ask, "What are you going to do when you finish school?"

Third, career planning can help you find more meaning in your present activities. For example, if you realize that chemistry is going to be important in your future field of work, you will likely spend more time studying this subject than you would otherwise.

Fourth, career planning can make it easier for you to recognize good opportunities when they are encountered. To illustrate this point, suppose that you have decided to become an airline pilot. As you progress toward this goal, many opportunities may arise — the chance to read certain books on flying, to meet people who are already pilots, to work in an aircraft hangar during summer vacation, to join a flying club. Who knows what possibilities there might be? Who knows what the outcomes might be? But one thing is certain, had you not already decided to become an airline pilot, you probably would have missed out on some of these opportunities.

Fifth, career planning can help you determine what you must do now in order to later get what you want. For example, if you intend to become a concert pianist, you may strive to perfect your techniques during present practice sessions. You may work part-time in order to get money for further training. You may play in the school orchestra in order to gain confidence in performing publicly.

Finally, career planning can help you discover what you must prepare for at each new stage in life. As you grow older, you change. Your circumstances change. And the world around you changes. By anticipating what is coming next and making ready for it, you are able to maintain a running adjustment between yourself and the various facts of life and the world of work. You are also in a better position to keep some options open as you progress through life.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was suggested that you try to answer two questions. Perhaps this is the proper time to consider the first one: Do I really believe that it is important to plan for the future?

Maybe you still feel that people's lives are largely controlled by fate. Maybe you feel that it is more important to live for today and let the future take care of itself. In either case, you could hardly be expected to place too much value on planning. But maybe you think that you can have some influence in shaping your future. In this case, you should read the following section. It describes what you will need to do in order to make a career plan for yourself. When you have finished reading it, you should then be ready to answer the second question: Am I prepared to devote enough time and effort to career planning to make it a worthwhile project?

## WHAT CAREER PLANNING INVOLVES

It would be easy to describe career planning if it followed the same set of routine steps for every person. But it doesn't. A major reason is that different people must make different career decisions at different times. For example, some people must choose an occupation quite early in their lives. This is particularly true of persons planning to take vocational training after high school. It may also be the case with persons who plan to take a job as soon as they finish school. Other persons may delay making an occupational choice for several years after leaving school. This is particularly true of persons planning to enroll in general university programs. It may also be the case with women who plan to marry and raise a family before seeking employment outside of the home. But regardless of the point at which important decisions must be made, there are a number of activities that are basic to developing a good career plan. They include the following:

1. *Self-Appraisal.* Self-study lays the foundation for all career planning. You must know what you are like — your interests, abilities and personality characteristics. You must know what you value. You must also know what you want to become. This self-information is then used in a variety of ways. For example, you use it to set short- and long-term goals for yourself. You use it when you are trying to determine the occupations for which you are best suited. You use it to plan needed changes in your present ways of behaving. You use it when you are making personal choices about your lifestyle, leisure activities and so on. You also use it when you are evaluating employment opportunities that are offered to you.

*2. Exploring and Studying Occupations.* There are a number of reasons why it is important to explore occupations and to carefully study any of the ones that interest you. Some of these reasons are presented below.

First of all, the occupation you choose could well determine whether or not you will be employed. For example, if you choose an occupation in which there is a surplus of workers, you could experience difficulty in finding a job. Similarly, if you choose an occupation which is likely to change or disappear as a result of technological advancements, you could experience difficulty in keeping a job unless you are willing to be retrained.

Second, the occupation you choose may determine whether or not you will enjoy your work. There are few occupations in which a person does not have some unpleasant tasks to do, but there is no need to work in a job in which you dislike most of the things to be done. By carefully choosing your occupation, you can increase the amount of pleasure and satisfaction you obtain from your work life.

Third, the occupation you choose may determine whether or not you will be successful in your work. Naturally, success depends on many things. It depends upon luck. It depends upon knowing the right people. It depends upon the amount of effort you put into your work. But it also depends upon your ability to do the work expected of you. If you choose an occupation that uses your strengths and makes few demands on your weaknesses, you will increase your chances of success.

Finally, the occupation you choose influences all other aspects of your life. For example, it determines where you will live and how often you will have to move. It determines the amount of time you are able to spend on leisure activities or with your family. It determines the persons with whom you will associate, the social status you hold, and your opportunities for leadership within the community. It helps to determine your attitudes, values, standards and daily behaviours. It also helps to determine the clothes you wear, the language you use, and your physical and mental health.

*3. Establishing a Timetable for Yourself.* The entire object of career planning is to enable you to make wise decisions at different points in your life. In order to do this, however, you must collect certain information ahead of time. The best way to ensure that you do not put off preparation until the last minute is to set up a timetable for yourself and stick to it. A timetable also has another advantage. It enables you to break a task down into more manageable parts.

*4. Anticipating Problems that Might Arise.* No one can foresee what the future holds. But it is possible to make some predictions about what you are likely to be doing a year, five years or even ten years from now. These "educated guesses" can help you to see what basic problems you might encounter and what you must do to solve these problems.

For example, right now you may be single and only concerned with supporting yourself. However, the responsibilities of marriage and raising children could have a considerable effect on your future career plans. You might have to seek a job which pays higher wages than the one you presently hold. You might have to seek a job which enables you to be at home more regularly. You might even have to give up working in order to look after your children. The possibilities are endless. But the present time is the proper time to think about these possibilities and to consider different courses of action that are open to you. After all, it is largely through looking ahead and preparing for the next stages in life that you will be able to keep some options open.

*5. Reviewing Your Plans and Progress.* Once you have completed the other career planning activities described here, you should be able to lay out a good beginning career plan for yourself. But every so often you must take stock of your situation and consider what steps have to be taken next. Taking inventory of progress and planning further steps will help you to cope with changes that are occurring around you — in your home, in the labour market, in your job, and so on.

If you decide to commit your time and effort to career planning, this book and its companion, **A Job Search Guide**, can help you go about the task systematically. They describe the steps you should take in order to be ready to make decisions about your future. They direct you to sources of information that will be useful in making these decisions. They also describe ways in which good choices can be made.

However, before you actually begin exploring and studying future possibilities, you should do two things. First, you should spend some time thinking about the role you want work to play in your life. This is the subject of one of the following chapters. Second, you should assess what you still have to do in order to develop a good career plan. You may already have completed some of the activities described here, but there is probably a lot left to do. Establish a timetable for yourself now and abide by it. In this way,

you can ensure that you will be ready for those times when important decisions must be made.

## SUMMARY

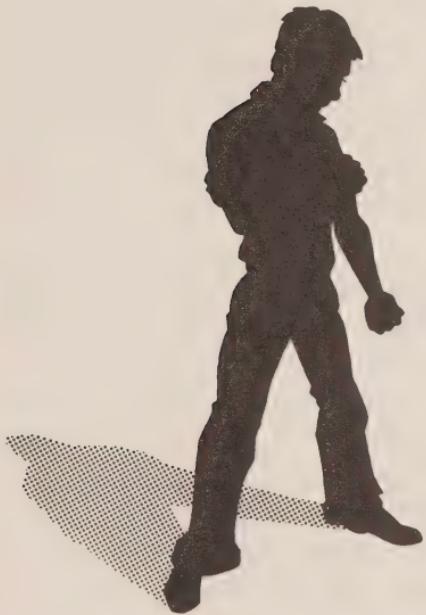
A "career" is the story of a person's journey through life. It includes all educational and work experiences, family activities, leisure activities, volunteer work and the like.

You do not exactly choose a career but as you progress through life, you make many decisions that affect the direction it takes. The object of career planning is to prepare you to make wise decisions when they are encountered.

Career planning begins during the early years of your life and extends through your old age. It includes many activities. For example, you must appraise your interests, abilities and personality characteristics. You must thoroughly explore occupations and jobs. You must establish timetables for collecting information on which to base decisions. You must anticipate problems that may arise in the future and consider different courses of action that are available to you. You must also review your plans and progress regularly. In this way, you are more likely to be able to keep some options open as you progress through life.



# **CHAPTER TWO**



**THE NATURE  
AND MEANING OF WORK**

You had your first experience with work early in life when your mother asked you to pick up your toys. Since that time the complexity of your work has increased considerably. For example, your school work has become more difficult each year. The chores you do at home have likely become more numerous. And you may have discovered that there is a lot of competition for part-time jobs these days.

Because of the things you have found out, you might feel that you already know what work is all about. And you could be right. But have you ever stopped to consider the deeper meaning that work takes on when it becomes part of your way of life? Probably not.

Naturally, the meanings given to work have changed a great deal through the centuries. For example, from historical sources it appears that the ancient Greeks regarded work as a curse. Physical work was drudgery imposed on them because the gods hated them. In later times, your ancestors came to see work as a virtue and idleness as a sin. They thought that a person was capable of rising to any height if s/he worked long and hard enough.

During industrialization, the meanings given to work changed again. A person's worth and status were no longer based upon how long and hard s/he worked, but rather upon the kind of work that s/he did. Thus, brains became more important than muscles.

Today, meanings associated with work vary widely from person to person and from group to group within society. For example, to some the word "work" means boredom and fatigue. To others it means joy and pleasure. Some people regard work as the only honourable way to earn a livelihood. In fact, even if they had enough money to survive, they would still want to work. Others have renounced work as a regular means of supporting themselves. They do not believe that it is a central and essential part of life. Between these extreme opinions about the meanings of work lie many other viewpoints. Do you know where you stand?

This chapter examines the role that work plays in people's lives. It also looks at some of the factors that are important in determining job satisfaction. As you read about other people's feelings on these subjects, you should begin to assess your own position. What role do you want work to play in your life? What returns will you expect from working? When you know what is important to you, it becomes easier to set goals for the future. It becomes easier to determine what you must do in order to realize your goals. It also becomes easier to make decisions about your future.

## WHY WORK?

When asked why they work, most people will give answers like this: "I have to live, don't I?" or "My family wouldn't eat if I didn't work." Obviously, work earnings are very important in providing necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. But do answers such as the ones given here show the complete picture? Probably not.

Today, it is a known fact the most Canadians do not have to work solely for physical survival. Yet, more and more people are joining the labour force each year. Particularly evident are the increasing numbers of women who are seeking full-and part-time employment. As well, consider the large percentage of people, wealthy in their own right, who voluntarily join the ranks of other workers. Surely, it isn't just money that entices them. But what is it?

Although they may deny it, all people have needs. And to understand why people work, it is necessary to know what needs are like.

### Needs Defined

**Needs** can be simply defined as things that you long for or desire. They create tensions within you which must be relieved or satisfied in some way.

Basically, everyone has two types of needs: physiological ones and psychological ones. Physiological needs include your needs for food, water, sleep and rest, activity and sex. Psychological needs include your needs for affection, belonging, achievement, social recognition and self-esteem. According to most experts, psychological needs can never be completely satisfied, but physiological needs can be. In addition, psychological needs are probably more often learned than are physiological ones.

The many needs, particularly psychological ones, that people have would take several pages to list. A more convenient way to examine them is to look at a classification system developed by Abraham Maslow. He says that there are five general categories of needs. These include:

1. *Physiological needs.* These are your basic biological needs—for example, the need for food, water and temperature regulation.
2. *Safety needs.* These needs are evident in people's efforts to maintain secure, predictable, orderly, and hence, non-threatening environments.

3. *Love and belongingness needs.* Included here would be the need to develop relationships involving mutual affection, and the need to be accepted and appreciated as a member of a group.

4. *Self-esteem needs.* These include your need for developing and maintaining a favourable opinion of yourself, and your need to have other people regard you with respect. Often, these are called your "ego-status" needs.

5. *Self-actualization needs.* These are your needs for personal growth — for example, your need to become what you are suited for, your need to develop your own identity, and your need for self-fulfillment.

These five categories of needs form what is called a hierarchy. This simply means that you can only pay attention to your higher level needs after your lower level needs are satisfied. For example, when you are hungry and need food, you are not likely to be too concerned with love and self-esteem.

But there is an even more important point to remember about needs. Although everyone has the same basic ones, not everyone has them to the same degree. For this and other reasons, people choose to fulfill their needs differently.

### **Personal Needs Met By Work**

As you read about what needs are like, you may have thought of a number of ways in which work could satisfy them. Perhaps you would like to compare your ideas with those of people who have been working for a long time. Here is a summary of findings from research studies which were concerned with identifying aspects of work that people find satisfying.

1. *Work provides economic satisfactions.* As stated earlier, work enables people to survive physically. It gives them the purchasing power needed to obtain food, shelter, clothing and other necessities. But in our society where these basic needs are almost automatically met, the returns from work provide other satisfactions.

Many people use their earnings to purchase homes, cars and other luxuries. For some, this meets a need they have to live in pleasant surroundings. For some, this meets a need to avoid any kind of physical discomfort. For many, this satisfies needs to impress other people.

Quite aside from the needs that are satisfied by acquiring material

possessions, work earnings can provide a sense of security. Many people obtain considerable satisfaction from knowing that their savings will provide them with some protection in the future.

2. *Work provides social satisfactions.* Work enables a lot of people to fulfill their social needs. Here they can be with others, talk to them, get to know them, and form friendships. In many cases, the favourable feelings that people develop through working together result in their continuing to see one another outside of employment. Thus, their friends and social companions off the job are often their associates at work.

3. *Work provides identity.* Many people find an answer to the ever-present question "Who am I?" through their work. They respond, "I am a farmer," "I am a cartographer," and so on.

Perhaps this seems like a strange satisfaction to obtain from work. But think for a moment about the terrible blow to their self-respect and self-confidence that many unemployed persons experience. Often they feel bitter, hopeless and depressed because of their inability to perform traditional roles. Or consider the feelings of uselessness that sometimes strike retired persons. When they don't have a work role to perform, they often think that they no longer have a reason for living.

Beyond providing an identity, work can satisfy people's needs for status and respect among their co-workers and in the community. Part of this status and respect may come from the way in which they perform their work tasks. For example, good performance may be viewed with approval by co-workers and supervisors. This gives people the feeling that they are doing something worthwhile.

But it may also come from the way others see the job itself. For example, some people are accorded status and respect in the community because they hold a job in which they have many workers under them. Others obtain it because they have a job that required a lengthy training period or one that is very complex. Still others obtain status and respect because of their large earnings.

4. *Work regulates life's activities.* How many times have you heard someone say, "I'd go nuts if I didn't work!" Why is this so? The most obvious reason is that work can relieve boredom, but for some people it serves another important purpose. It brings a sense of orderliness to their lives. They know what they will be doing today, tomorrow and the day after that. Hence, they feel safe.

Now as you read this list, you must have been wondering whether people ever express any satisfactions with doing the work itself.

Indeed they do, particularly when they are involved in higher level jobs. Some of the more common satisfactions they obtain are described in the following paragraphs.

5. *Work provides a sense of achievement.* For many people, work satisfies their need for mastery or achievement over situations, people, ideas or machines. Consider the feelings of pleasure and pride you obtained when you first drove a car or rode a bicycle by yourself. These are similar to the ones some people experience from their work achievements. For example, they may take pride in being able to perform their work tasks quickly and efficiently. They may be proud of the way in which they handle other people. They may take pride in the final product they turn out. The achievement needs that people satisfy through work are as varied as the jobs themselves.

6. *Work provides a sense of usefulness.* Work enables some people to satisfy their need to contribute to something worthwhile. For example, they might feel that they are contributing to the success of the company through their efforts. They might feel that they are helping other people. They might feel that the product they are helping to produce is a valuable one.

But aside from fulfilling a need to be useful, work satisfies some people's needs "to belong" or to be "part of the crowd". For example, they might take pride in the fact that they are part of a company that has a long history of service in the community. Or perhaps they might feel good about being known as a member of a certain group within the company.

7. *Work provides an outlet for interests and aptitudes.* People who choose their work carefully often find that it provides them with an opportunity to use their special aptitudes and talents. It also provides them with a chance to do things that interest them. This can produce a number of different satisfactions. For some, it meets a need they have to do something in which they can excel. For some, it meets a need they have to be creative. For some, it meets a need they have to experience constant personal growth.

From this discussion, it should be clear that your work has the potential of being an important means of satisfying your needs. For example, it can be an outlet for your ideas and ideals. It can be an outlet for your talents and temperaments. It can also be an outlet for your enthusiasm and energies. But it can only be all these things if you carefully select it. In the end, your choice of an occupation might well be determined by the strength of a particular need you

have. But as you might suspect, needs are not the only thing you should consider.

Before making a choice, you have to think through your answer to the question, "What returns will I expect from working?" For example, is income "tops" on the list of things you consider important in a job? Or does the prestige of the job mean more to you? Are the physical surroundings in which you work a very important factor? Or does the contribution that your work will make to the lives of others influence you most? These are just some of the things that can make a difference in your job satisfaction. They are called your values. Do you know what your values are? As you read the following section, you will have a chance to think about them.

## **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WORKER SATISFACTION**

Many surveys of job satisfaction have been taken and the results have been quite varied. Sometimes, most of the workers interviewed have stated that they are happy in their jobs. At other times, as few as ten per cent of those interviewed have been satisfied. A number of reasons could be given to explain these varying results, but they really aren't important here. What is important is to consider the factors that usually contribute to worker satisfaction. Some of these things are discussed below.

### **Good Wages**

Because the wages from work enable people to buy necessities and other things, they are often important in determining job satisfaction. Yet, rarely do they appear at the top of the list in surveys.

As a matter of fact, if workers are being fairly paid by an employer, they will often list wages as one of the least important factors in determining their satisfaction with a job.

### **Job Security**

For many people, job security is very important. They want to know that they will have steady employment and that they will not be replaced by other people or machines within a few years. To some, job security also means working at something in which they are not likely to lose time through accidents. Hence, many people prefer a lower income which is guaranteed to continue over several years to a higher one that will be short-lived.

## **Opportunities for Advancement**

With expenses rising every year, many workers are more concerned about the future than the present. Therefore, opportunities for advancement are often given a high rating in job satisfaction surveys. As well, it is important that fair practices be used in determining promotions. For example, most workers would be unhappy in a situation in which the employer promotes family members, regardless of their abilities.

## **Good Working Conditions**

Many workers, particularly those in clerical fields, list good working conditions as important for job satisfaction. They want to work in a clean, attractive, well-lighted and well-ventilated place, even if it means accepting a lower salary.

## **Good Human Relations**

Probably the most important factors contributing to worker satisfaction are the human relationships in jobs. For example, people want to feel that their work efforts are appreciated by both their co-workers and supervisors. They want to be told when they are doing a good job and they want help when they are not doing well. People want to feel that they are "in" on things that are happening in their company. They want to work with others whom they like and can get along with. They want fair bosses. And when things are going wrong, either on the job or at home, they want someone to take their problems to.

It would appear, therefore, that people work for many returns other than just monetary ones. They may be satisfied with their jobs if they provide security, opportunities for advancement, good working conditions and good relationships. They may also be satisfied with their jobs for a variety of other reasons. For example, they may be satisfied with their work because it is interesting and varied. They may be satisfied because their co-workers are loyal to one another. They may be satisfied by the way in which they are disciplined by their supervisors. Much depends on what their values are.

There is also another important point to keep in mind. Different people may obtain different satisfactions from doing the same job, and what is satisfying to one person may be meaningless and boring to another. Only you can decide what will be most important for you.

## **SUMMARY**

Work occupies a central place in the lives of most people, but attitudes toward it vary widely. Some view it with pleasure and joy while others view it with disdain and displeasure. Much depends on their experiences in growing up and their education and training.

Regardless of their views, however, most people are able to satisfy some needs through their work. For example, some are able to satisfy achievement needs. Some are able to satisfy their need for approval from others. Some satisfy their needs for personal and social relationships. Some satisfy their needs for status and respect. Some satisfy their need to serve others. The same job may satisfy different needs for different people.

Similarly, different people may value different things in the same job. For example, some people may value the income they receive more than anything else. Some may value the working conditions. Some may consider the human relationships to be most important. Others may be influenced by such factors as opportunities for advancement and the variety in their work duties.

In planning for the future, it is very important to give serious consideration to two questions: (1) What role do I want work to play in my life? (2) What returns will I expect from working? When you have answers to these questions, it becomes easier to set goals and make decisions.



# CHAPTER THREE



**DECISION-MAKING:  
A COMPLEX  
PERSONAL PROCESS**

You have been making decisions for a long time. Some of these decisions, such as whether to get up in the morning, have been made so automatically that you probably have never even thought about them. Other decisions, such as whether to play hockey or soccer, may have required some thinking on your part. But chances are you didn't need to gather additional information in order to decide. Now, however, you are facing some decisions that will require a lot of thought, study and investigation before you make a choice.

Take the matter of choosing an occupation. As you read Chapter Two, you had a chance to look at some of the aspects of work that give people enjoyment and satisfaction. For example, you saw that work provides some people with an outlet for their talents, temperaments, interests and energies. You saw that work provides some people with opportunities to be with others, to make friends, and to contribute to something worthwhile. You saw that work provides many people with economic satisfactions. But you also saw that work only has the potential to provide a variety of satisfactions if you choose it carefully.

Unfortunately, this is where a large number of young people fail. In many instances, they make choices without knowing what they really want and what they are capable of doing. Or they make choices before thoroughly exploring the opportunities available to them.

Sometimes, they use poor strategies for processing information and, all too often, they fail to consider the consequences of their decisions.

Admittedly, anyone can make a mistake in something as difficult as choosing an occupation. But oftentimes, these mistakes can be avoided by using good decision-making skills.

This chapter describes the major requirements of skillful decision-making. It also examines some of the difficulties you can encounter in making life's decisions. As you read the following sections, try to assess your own situation. Do you have the skills required to make a good decision? Or do you need more experience and practice in order to do it satisfactorily?

## THE NATURE OF DECISION-MAKING

The simplest explanation of decision-making is that it is a process in which you make a selection from two or more possible choices. A decision does not exist unless there is more than one course of action or alternative available to you.

There are always certain limitations on any decision that you make. First of all, it is limited by what you are capable of doing. It can also be limited by your knowledge of the alternatives available to you. For example, if you cannot swim, you cannot choose between swimming and rowing to get to a raft in the middle of a lake. Or if you are choosing a school in which to take a hairstyling course but do not know that certain schools exist, you cannot choose one of them.

A second limitation on any decision is determined by your environment. If you are capable of either swimming or rowing to the raft mentioned above but no boats are available, you cannot choose to row. Similarly, if only one institution offers the hairstyling course you want, you do not have your choice of schools.

Any decision is further limited by what you are willing to do. For example, if you are willing to borrow a friend's boat to get out to the raft, you may increase your alternatives. If you are unwilling to move to another town, you may restrict your choices of where to take your hairstyling course. In most instances, what you are willing to do is determined by what you value most.

Now consider that last statement again. Does it give you any ideas about the nature of decision-making? For example, does it suggest to you that decision-making is more than just a simple problem in logic? Does it suggest to you that feelings and desires enter into the making of a decision? Indeed it should.

To make satisfying choices, one of the major things you must be able to do is to specify what is important to you. And strangely enough, this is one of the greatest deterrents to skillful decision-making for many people. They cannot clearly see what they value when they are faced with a choice. As a result, they are often unable to determine what they want to attain today, tomorrow, or in the more distant future.

Besides knowing your values, there is a second factor which enters into skillful decision-making. This is your ability to determine probabilities. An example might help to explain them.

You feel that you would like to take physics instead of biology as

an elective subject in grade eleven. Your counsellor points out that students with grade ten marks similar to yours have always done better in biology than physics. But you also possess some additional information. You know that physics is going to be important to you in your future field of work. You also know that you didn't study as hard as you might have during the past year. What will you decide?

You might decide to take biology because you feel that you have a better chance, or higher probability, of getting a good mark. Or you might decide to take physics because you feel that you can "beat the odds". What you decide will greatly depend on such things as your personal preferences, your willingness to assume certain risks, and your estimate of probable outcomes.

But it will also depend on other things. One of these is the information you possess on each of the alternatives available to you. In the situation described here, what might your decision be if you didn't know how other students had done in grade eleven biology? Or what might it be if you didn't know that physics is going to be important to you in future? Another major aspect of deciding, then, is collecting useful and relevant information. This means that you must know what kind of information you need to collect, where to get it, and how to evaluate it.

Finally, you must be able to convert the information you gather into an action. Therefore, you must know and be able to use some kind of deciding strategy. For example, you may choose the alternative you desire most. You may select the alternative that has the highest probability of being successful. You may choose the one that is most likely to avoid the worst possible result. Or you may choose the most desirable and most likely alternative. Only you can determine the strategy that will be best for you in your situation.

## **DIFFICULTIES IN DECISION-MAKING**

When you read about the decision-making process, it always sounds so simple. You clarify your values and establish objectives. You acquire appropriate information. You assign probabilities to the alternatives you identify. You evaluate probable outcomes. You decide. But sometimes it isn't simple. As a matter of fact, sometimes it's so hard to decide on a course of action that you end up delaying, choosing blindly, or not even choosing at all.

This section looks at some of the difficulties encountered by decision-makers. Examine them closely. They could be the same

ones that you are experiencing. If you can recognize your problems, you are often at least half-way toward finding a solution.

1. *Conflicts.* When one alternative is much better than another one, it is clearly easy to make a decision. Many times, however, one alternative is good in some ways and another alternative is good in other ways. What do you do? In this case, you must rate or rank the things that are important to you. You must also estimate the chances that certain outcomes will occur, and rate or rank the various possible outcomes on the basis of their desirability to you.

Similarly, you can be in a situation where all of the alternatives seem equally attractive or all appear equally unattractive. What do you do then? You follow the same procedure that was suggested above. However, you should be aware that you may have no compromise or give up certain interests when all alternatives are attractive. In a case where none of the alternatives seem attractive, you should consider the possibility of trying to find other courses of action before making a decision.

2. *Uncertainty of Outcomes.* One of the most difficult things about decision-making is its uncertainty. For example, when you are choosing an occupation, it would be much easier if the outcomes of your alternatives could be accurately predicted ahead of time. But they can't be. And if you were to wait until the future becomes clear, you might spend your entire life in a state of indecision.

People deal with uncertainty in a number of ways. Those who don't mind taking risks ignore it completely when they are making a decision. Others examine the probabilities and choose the safest alternative. Still others examine both the probability and value of each outcome to them before deciding how much risk they are prepared to take. This is, perhaps, the most logical and reasonable approach. But it is also the most difficult. You must know what you value and be able to state your objectives clearly. You must be able to predict the outcomes of each alternative, and estimate the likelihood of their occurring. You must also be able to rank or rate the desirability of each outcome.

3. *Personal Characteristics.* Another difficult thing about decision-making is that your personality, your previous experiences, your feelings and thoughts about yourself, and many other factors act in a very complex way to influence your choices. They also determine the options or opportunities for choice that you feel are available to you. Because these influences are often operating on an unconscious level, they can sometimes make it hard for you to be objective and realistic when you are deciding.

Take the decision to marry as an example. You may know that you can't afford it. You may know that you are not ready to settle down. You may not even be sure that you have found the right partner. All the evidence would suggest that you shouldn't marry at this time. Yet, you do so. Feelings and desires, rather than your objective evaluation of the alternatives, have produced this decision.

Now, you can try to be objective and realistic when you are making decisions. But no matter how hard you try, some subjective elements will always enter in. What this suggests is that you must know yourself well if you are to make satisfying choices. It also suggests that decision-making is very much an individual matter. You are different from every other person. If you rely heavily on the advice of others or if you allow others to make your decisions for you, it is highly likely that you will not be satisfied with the outcomes.

4. *Processing Information.* Even when they have all the facts, some people hesitate to make a choice. Why is this so?

The most obvious reason is that they fear the consequences of their decisions. In other words, they know that they have no control over the outcomes, regardless of whether or not they have the information required.

But there is another less obvious reason why some people hesitate. Experience has poorly prepared them for sorting and interpreting the large amount of information they must sometimes handle in making a decision. What they need, therefore, is a way of reducing the number of facts they consider at one time. Can you provide some appropriate suggestions?

Actually, there are a number of good strategies that can be used, but they depend entirely on your ability to state what is most important to you. They also depend on your ability to prioritize what is important to you. Once you have done this, you can do a number of things. For example, you can examine each alternative separately to determine whether it is likely to give you what you want. Or perhaps an easier way is to take your most important objective or consideration and apply it to each of your alternatives in turn. If certain alternatives are not likely to give you what you most desire, you eliminate them from further consideration.

An important point to remember is that you cannot become skilled in processing information for decisions overnight. It requires that you find a strategy that you are comfortable in using. Then you must practice that strategy in everyday decision-making situations

until you are confident in your ability to apply it.

5. *Sequence of Decisions.* A major source of difficulty for most people is the fact that life's decisions are rarely made independently of one another. The decisions you made in your past, the ones you are making now, and the ones you will make in the future are all related to one another in a complex way. For example, the decisions you make about high school programs and subjects within the curriculum are going to affect the options you will have with regard to both post-secondary training and work. The decisions you make about work will subsequently have an effect upon decisions you make about your life outside of work, and vice-versa.

Because the decisions you make often have the effect of limiting your future options rather than expanding them, it is very important for you to consider them carefully. First of all, you should determine what decisions you must make now or in the near future, and what ones can be delayed. You must then determine how critical these decisions are, and the consequence they will have on your next important decision. By doing this, you will have a better chance of maintaining some opportunities for choice as you grow older. You are also less likely to make choices that will result in unsatisfying outcomes to you.

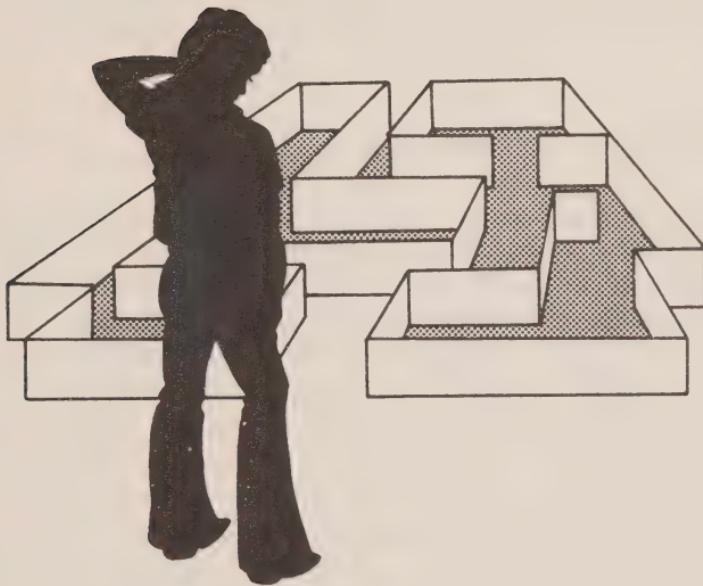
## SUMMARY

It is not easy to make decisions that result in satisfying outcomes. You have to know yourself, including what you are able to do and what is important to you. You have to collect adequate, relevant information on each of the alternatives available to you. You also need to be able to use an effective strategy for converting your information into an action.

A number of problems are commonly encountered by people when they are faced with choices. Sometimes they find it difficult to choose between two equally attractive alternatives, or they find it difficult to decide because the outcomes are so uncertain. Sometimes personal feelings and desires make it hard to be objective and realistic. Sometimes it is difficult to sort and interpret all of the information that is gathered. And of course, decision-making is always difficult when the decisions being made will have more than immediate consequences.



# CHAPTER FOUR



**THE PROCESS OF  
CHOOSING AN OCCUPATION**

As you learned from reading the last chapter, skillful decision-making requires three things. It requires examination and recognition of your personal capabilities and values. It requires knowledge and use of adequate, relevant information. It requires knowledge and use of an effective strategy for converting this information into an action.

This chapter also looks at decision-making. But this time the process is considered within the context of choosing an occupation. As you read it, you should again assess your own position. What do you still need to do before you can make a satisfying occupational choice? For example, do you need to learn more about yourself? Do you need to collect more information on occupational possibilities? Do you need more practice in making decisions?

## ESTABLISHING A TIMETABLE

One of the first things you must realize is that occupational choices develop very gradually, and it could be months or even years before you reach a firm career plan for yourself. Naturally, there are some people who reach decisions early in life. For example, there are people who decide to pursue a certain field of work when they are still in elementary school. And they never change that original choice as they grow older. There are others who are able to decide before they enter high school. Hence, they enroll in a program that will enable them to go directly to work when they finish school or into training for their chosen occupation. For the majority of people, however, occupational choices are delayed at least until they are completing high school. They may even be delayed until the persons concerned have finished a number of years of post-secondary education or worked in a number of different jobs.

Now, there is nothing wrong with postponing your choice of an occupation as long as possible. As a matter of fact, it is probably wise to do so. If you choose too early, you could miss new possibilities that might emerge as a result of learning more about yourself and different occupations.

But this is not to suggest that you should just sit back and relax. Indeed, you have many tasks to complete before you will be ready to make your occupational choice. And unless you do them now, while you still have time and resources available for them, you could end up in an unfortunate situation. For example, you could end up

with few options from which to choose, simply because you don't know the possibilities. You could end up basing your decision on superficial things, such as what your friends are doing, simply because you don't know what you want or are capable of doing. You could end up having to rely heavily on the advice of others. As you have already seen, these three factors rarely combine to produce a decision with satisfying outcomes.

So where do you start? You start by establishing a timetable of the things you still must do before you can make an occupational choice. And you abide by that schedule. The following sections, as well as the following chapters, will help you determine the tasks you have to complete. They will also help you determine the approximate order in which these tasks should be done.

## BUILDING BASES FOR CHOICE

### **Self-Exploration**

It has already been stated that self-study lays the foundation for all career planning and decision-making. You need to know something about your interests, preferences and values. You need to know what you are capable of doing. You also need to know what you are willing to do in order to realize your goals. The first step in building a basis for making an occupational choice, then, is finding out what you are like.

Having a clear understanding of yourself will help you in a number of ways. First, it will provide a frame of reference for you when you are looking for occupational possibilities. Rather than just searching aimlessly, you will be able to focus your exploration on those occupations that would seem to allow you to use your special skills and abilities, express your interests, attitudes and values, and take on satisfying roles. Second, it will help you to recognize suitable occupations or fields of work when they are encountered. Third, it will make it easier for you to see what personal adjustments, if any, you must make in your present ways of behaving.

There is no doubt that a personal inventory is difficult to carry out well. It requires time. It also requires a lot of effort. Yet, those who do take the time and trouble to make good personal inventories find that they profit very much from the experience. How, then, do you begin?

Probably the easiest way to begin is by talking to people who know you well. For example, family members, teachers, counsellors, co-workers and friends can all help you to understand yourself a little better. Of course, they cannot tell you everything about yourself that will be important since they can only judge you on the ways they have seen you behaving in their presence. They also cannot fully appreciate your innermost thoughts, your hopes and concerns, your deepest ambitions and ideals. But they can provide some useful information on which to build. After all, what other people think of you often colours what you think of yourself, doesn't it?

A second way to obtain information on yourself is by taking certain standardized tests and inventories. The General Aptitude Test Battery, the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory are all good examples. Again, the profile you obtain will not tell you everything about yourself that is important. You could be nervous, tired or not feeling well when you take the test, and this can affect your responses. Your experiences in life so far could be very different from the ones with which the test items are concerned. Any number of factors like these make for test results that do not do you justice. But they can give you some notions about what you are like and, to this extent, they are useful.

The third, and possibly the most effective, way of studying yourself is by surveying your life's activities. What have you done in school? What have you done at home? What have you done in part-time and summer jobs? What have you done in your spare time? If you take stock of the various tasks you have done, your feelings about them, and your success in them, you will obtain some very useful information. Undoubtedly, you will find that there are some things that you do well and some not so well. You will find that there are some things that you like and some you do not like. You will also find some things that interest you and some that do not.

Of course, you won't discover everything about yourself that is going to be relevant for the future. You are going to change a great deal as the years go by and as life provides you with more and more experiences. However, even at this stage in your development, you should be able to arrive at a sufficiently accurate self-assessment to at least realize three things: what you want from work, what you have the potential of giving to an occupation, and what you are willing to do in order to realize your goals.

## **Occupational Exploration**

Once you have completed your personal inventory, your next task is to look for occupational possibilities. Now, if you are like most people, you can name at least a dozen or more occupations that you already know something about. But this is not nearly a wide enough base to use for narrowing down the occupations which might interest you. An example might help to explain.

Suppose that you are interested in helping other people. What alternatives are available to you? From your present knowledge of occupations, you might come up with a list that is something like this: doctor, nurse, lawyer, social worker, salesclerk, teacher, secretary, bus driver, librarian and law enforcement officer.

As you examine this list, you then might say to yourself: "But I have no intention of going to university." So you would eliminate the occupations of doctor, lawyer, social worker, teacher and librarian from further consideration. Looking at the remaining alternatives, you might next say: "With my bad back, I couldn't stand to be on my feet all day long." And you would remove the occupations of nurse, salesclerk and law enforcement officer.

This leaves you with two possibilities. You can either become a secretary or a bus driver. Neither of these alternatives may be very attractive to you. Yet, you might choose one of them simply because you can see no other alternatives. Is this likely to result in your being happy and satisfied in your work? Probably not.

Your next task, then, should be to become more familiar with the range and diversity of occupations in which Canadian men and women are employed. In other words, your goal is to produce a list of alternatives that is broad enough to eventually enable you to make a good occupational choice. There are, for example, hundreds of occupations in which you would have an opportunity to help other people. But unless you know that they exist, you cannot possibly choose one of them.

Now, just as there are a number of ways to do a personal inventory, so there are a number of ways of expanding your awareness of occupational possibilities. One way is by simply becoming more alert in your everyday activities. As an illustration, do you know how many different occupations are represented by the various workers in your school? Which workers in your school are involved

in occupations which give them an opportunity to help other people?

A second way to locate occupational possibilities is by reading widely. A third way is by consulting informed persons such as school counsellors, Canada Manpower counsellors, employers, workers and the like. Other ways include watching films on occupations, attending career days in your school, taking plant tours, and actually working in a variety of jobs.

Obviously, your search for occupational possibilities will be more successful if you use more than one means of obtaining them. That is, you will be able to locate more alternatives if you read, talk to people, take tours and so on than you will if you just talk to people.

You must also keep in mind that you are not looking for just any occupational alternatives. You are looking for ones that are potentially suitable for you. Therefore, you should use the information from your personal inventory to direct your search.

For example, what are your interests? What are your preferences in terms of the physical activities associated with work? What kind of physical environment do you want to work in? What kind of emotional climate do you want to work in? What are you most capable of doing? These are the things that should be concerning you when you are initially exploring occupations. And each one of these factors could be used to generate a separate list of alternatives.

Now, if you have a lot of time for broadly exploring occupations, the approaches described here should yield a substantial number of occupational possibilities. But what if you don't have several months to devote to this task? Is there anything you can still do to ensure that your prospects are not limited?

Fortunately there is. Today, many schools and colleges have computers, occupational exploration kits and information centres set up in ways that will enable you to access information on a wide variety of occupations in a short time.

The way in which these systems work is quite simple. Occupations are classified by different descriptors. For example, they may be classified by the interest, aptitude and personality patterns of the workers. By taking certain tests and inventories, you can develop a similar profile of your own. You then use your self-information to find out about occupational possibilities just as you learned to do earlier. For example, if you are interested in "working

with things and objects", you might use this descriptor as your access to the system. What you would get back is a list of occupations in which you would be able to "work with things and objects."

## MOVING TOWARD CHOICE

Once you have located a sufficient number of occupational possibilities on which to eventually base a decision, your next task is to begin the narrowing process. But at this stage, you only want to eliminate from further consideration those occupations which are least likely to result in satisfying outcomes.

Here is one way in which this can be done. First, go back over the results of your self-analysis and pick out any things that will eventually limit the choices you have available to you. For example, perhaps you presently have a grade eleven education and are only willing to attend school for one more year. Perhaps you have severe allergies. Or perhaps you have a very low aptitude for working with figures. Using this information, then look at each alternative carefully. If there are some that are obviously unsuitable, you may decide to eliminate them from further consideration.

Now, some people think that they are ready to make a good choice from the remaining alternatives. They have located occupations that would seem to allow them to express their interests and preferences. They have located occupations that would seem to be appropriate for their capabilities. The environment in which they would have to perform the work seems satisfactory. The physical activities required are appropriate for their abilities. But usually people aren't ready to make a good choice yet. Why is this so?

The major reason is that they still do not have adequate information on each of the alternatives. Or if they do have the information, they have not yet sorted and weighed it carefully.

Before you narrow your range of alternatives still further, it is very important to study the ones that interest you carefully. Some of the things you should find out are discussed briefly below.

First, you should know what the workers in each occupation do. For example, it is not enough to know that they work with people and that their work involves a variety of duties. You should know something about the ways in which they work with people and how extensive their involvement is. You should know precisely what the duties are that they have to perform and how often they are performed. You should know something about the extent of their responsibilities.

Second, you should know what qualifications and preparation are required for entry, as well as methods of entry. For example, it is not enough to know that you need two years of training beyond Grade 12. You need to know what kind of training you must take and the different ways in which it can be done. Must you attend a vocational school or can you take your training on the job? Do you have to belong to a union in order to enter the occupation or do you have to join one after you enter? Is special licensing required?

Third, you should know something about trends in employment which may affect the future outlook of the occupation. As you will recall, your choice can well determine whether you will even be employed. It can also determine how steadily you will be employed and whether you will have to be retrained in the future.

Fourth, you should know something about opportunities for advancement and promotion. For example, is there a range of activities within the occupation to which you can advance? Or does advancement come with promotion to other occupations, such as supervisory and administrative ones?

Depending on what is important to you, there are other things you may want to find out. For example, you may want to find out about the salary ranges of people employed in the occupation. You may want to find out what effect the occupation would have on your life outside of work. You may want to find out whether the majority of people are employed in large or small companies.

A systematic method for collecting information is described in a later chapter. As well, sources of information and how to evaluate the quality of your information are described elsewhere.

## NARROWING YOUR CHOICE

Assume, then, that you have collected the information you need on each of your occupational possibilities. What is your next task going to be?

Obviously, your next task is going to be similar to the one that you performed earlier. You are going to be evaluating each of your alternatives on the basis of the information you obtained on them. Thus, you will be examining each occupational possibility to determine whether it is likely to provide you with the satisfactions that you expect to receive from working. You will also be examining each one to determine your likelihood of success.

Now, a number of things can happen at this stage. Some people find that they are ready to make a choice. They know what they want. They know what they are most capable of doing. They also know what they must do and what they are willing to do in order to realize their goals. So they decide and then proceed with plans to implement their decision.

Other people find that they are not ready to make a choice. In most instances, they are still lacking information. For example, before they can decide, some people need to thoroughly investigate job openings and prospective employers. This is often the case with people who are planning to go directly to work after leaving school. Some people need to learn more about themselves. They still don't know what is important to them or what is most desirable in terms of possible outcomes.

Because none of the alternatives seem that attractive, some people want to investigate other possibilities before they decide. And some people want to make other decisions before they choose an occupation. This is often the case with people who want to take some kind of further education and training before they begin to work.

## **IMPLEMENTING YOUR DECISION**

Once you have chosen an occupation, your next task becomes one of making plans to implement your decision. The suggested method here is exactly the same as the one proposed for preparing to choose an occupation. First, identify all the things you must do. For example, do you now have to collect information on schools offering training? Do you have to begin looking for job openings? Do you have to make arrangements to obtain union membership? Then, put the things you must do into a proper sequence, and establish a timetable for carrying them out.

Now, as you progress toward the realization of your occupational goal, there are a couple of things that you should keep in mind. First, it is quite possible that you will encounter difficulties at some point along the way. For example, suppose that you have decided to become an electrician and your plan is to take your training at Selkirk College. What would you do if you were not accepted into their program? Some people might give up their goal immediately. Others might manage to overcome this difficulty by enrolling at and being accepted by another institution. Depending on the reason they weren't accepted, still others might find different solutions.

When you encounter difficulties, only you can decide on the best course of action. But the major point is this. If your goal is very important to you, don't give it up until you have thoroughly investigated possible solutions.

At the same time, if it looks as though the entire road to realizing your goal is going to be filled with difficulties, you might do well to re-appraise yourself. It is entirely possible that you have not chosen the occupation which is most appropriate for you. Now, rather than five or ten years hence, is the time to deal with this possibility and to adjust your plans accordingly.

## SUMMARY

Occupational choices develop gradually and it could be months or even years before you are ready to decide. In the meantime, you should prepare yourself by collecting the information you will need to eventually make a satisfying choice.

First, you must appraise yourself. You need to know what is most important to you. You need to know what you are capable of doing. You also need to know what you are willing to do in order to realize your goals.

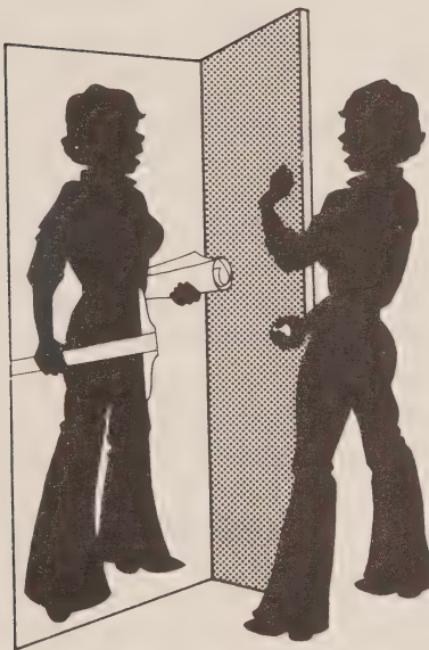
Second, you must broadly survey occupational possibilities. If you have a large number of alternatives from which to choose, you are more likely to be satisfied with your decision.

Third, you must thoroughly study each occupational possibility. Some of the things you should know about them include (1) what the workers do; (2) qualifications and preparation required for entry, as well as methods of entry; (3) trends in employment which may affect the future outlook; and (4) opportunities for advancement and promotion.

Once they have done these three things, some people are ready to decide. Others still have to collect additional information. For example, they may want to investigate job prospects or training programs before they make their choice.

After a decision has been reached, you must make plans to implement it. Sometimes this involves preparation for your next critical decision.

# CHAPTER FIVE



## DISCOVERING YOURSELF

I am . . . I need . . . I want . . . I can . . . I should . . . I feel . . . I believe . . . How simple these phrases sound. Yet people use them over and over again when they are describing something that is very complicated. They use them when they are describing what they are really like as individuals.

Can you describe yourself using these terms right now? Unless you have recently been taking stock of yourself, chances are you can't. You might even think that such a task is futile. But it isn't.

You have already seen that all aspects of you as a person — your personality, your abilities, your goals, your values, your hopes, your previous experiences, your needs, your feelings about yourself, and many other factors — work together in a complex way to influence your decisions. They even determine the opportunities and choices which you feel are open to you at different stages in life.

Self-appraisal, then, is a very important part of your preparation for choosing an occupation. It enables you to discover what is important to you. It enables you to discover what you might be interested in doing. It also enables you to discover what you are most capable of doing. And when you know these things about yourself, you will be in a better position to act, to adjust, and to estimate the possibilities that various choices present.

This chapter describes how you can come to know yourself better by using two strategies: making an inventory of your life's experiences and activities, and talking to people who know you well. Before you can begin, however, you need to know something about the way in which your past experiences have influenced you. This will help you to better understand why you presently behave as you do. It will also help you to understand why you feel as you do about certain things. Information such as this is very useful when you are trying to determine what you must do in order to realize your life's goals.

## THE PROCESS OF DEFINING WHO YOU ARE

Like everyone else, you have a mental picture of yourself. It consists of a set of beliefs you have about what you are really like, how other people see you, and what kind of person you would like to be. These beliefs do not just suddenly appear. They are developed through a long, involved process of self-exploration and discovery which goes on as long as you live.

Do you remember when you decided that your fingers and toes were "you" and the teddy bear beside you in your crib was "not

you"? Or do you remember your mother's reaction when you took your first wobbling steps? Probably not. But even then you were beginning to form your first ideas about yourself as an individual.

Since that time you have had many other experiences. You have also done many things. All of these have aided the growth of your self-picture. For example, you have lived with your family for many years. You have formed friendships. You have worked at various jobs, either in or outside of the home. You probably have done some travelling. You have engaged in a variety of leisure activities.

Each time you have done something like this you have had an opportunity to try out different roles or different ways of behaving. You have also had a chance to evaluate your feelings about what you did and what other people, such as your parents, friends and teachers, thought of you. Some of the roles you have found satisfying. Some have not been satisfying. You have found things you like to do and things you do well. You have also found things you don't like to do and things you don't do well.

But regardless of the outcome, each experience you have had in the past will have affected your self-picture in some way. Similarly, each experience you have in the future will affect the picture.

Sometimes the experience will result in an addition to it. For example, you try Italian ravioli for the first time and find out that you like it. Sometimes the experience will cause you to revise your self-picture. For example, you finally pass a math test after a series of failures and realize that you're not so dumb after all. At still other times, your reaction to an experience will merely confirm what you already knew about yourself. For example, you try to set up a physical-workout schedule for yourself for the tenth time, and for the tenth time you discover that you don't have the will power to stick to a schedule.

## **FACTORS THAT HAVE SHAPED YOU**

Now, you did not just suddenly become friendly, dependable, fun-loving Laurie Simcoe with brown hair, medium build, an aptitude for mathematics, an interest in flying, and a passionate distaste for getting up early in the morning. Rather, you have developed from a combination of biological and social forces. Heredity laid the physical foundations. But your environment, including your home and family, school, church, friends, neighbors, community and country, has affected you in turn.

Many attempts have been made to evaluate the relative importance of hereditary and environmental factors, without conclusive results. Clearly, however, you need to know what influences have been at work in your life in order to understand yourself. In the following sections, some of the things that have influenced you to be what you are will be examined.

### **Biological Factors**

You are in part a product of what has been passed on to you biologically by your parents, grandparents and ancestors. This inheritance appears in the form of certain physical and mental traits.

Perhaps you have blue eyes like your mother's and grandma's long, pointed nose. But what about your quick temper that so much resembles your father's? Was it transmitted to you biologically? Or did you learn a behaviour characterized by quick temper through associating with him and other members of your family?

At this time, no one can say how much of human behaviour is the result of inherited traits or tendencies, and it might never be possible to know exactly. It can only really be said that heredity provides the raw material from which you are made. What you become depends very much upon the environment in which you are raised. It also depends a great deal on what you, personally, decide to do with yourself. For example, if you find that your quick temper causes you difficulty, you can learn to curb it through practice. If you find that the place in which you are living provides you with few opportunities in terms of jobs, you may be able to move. You can even change that long, pointed nose which causes you such embarrassment if, for example, you are willing to have plastic surgery!

### **Environmental Factors**

Have you ever stopped to consider how much other people have to say about what you do? Even if you were free from parental control, you would still not be free of controls imposed by society. Indeed, from the moment you are born, the environment in which you live pushes, restrains, guides and advises you in correct and appropriate ways of living. Some of the more important environmental factors that have shaped your experience and behaviour are described below.

*Family.* During the early years of your life, your family provided you

with many experiences that have helped to make you the kind of person you are today. For example, they may have given or withheld love and affection. They may or may not have provided you with ample opportunity for learning. They may have respected you as an individual or tried to relive their own dreams through you. They rewarded and punished your behaviour. They provided models for you to imitate.

Whatever the experiences may have been, they have had far-reaching effects on you. They have, at least to some extent, affected your intellectual development. They have also affected your behaviours. Perhaps you are active, inquisitive and out-going. Or you might be quiet, shy and inclined toward day-dreaming. You may be independent or highly dependent on others. You may be warm in your relations with others or very cool and impersonal. Many of the behaviours that you now exhibit were learned in your childhood. But this is not to suggest that they cannot be changed if you strongly desire to do so.

*Companions and the Community.* Once you were past the toddling stage, groups outside your family began to exert an influence on you. First there were your playmates. They approved or disapproved of your behaviours, and required you to continually learn and modify your behaviours in order to "remain friends". Then there were your classmates and teachers in school. Later, still other factors affected your development — your neighbourhood, your church, the recreational groups to which you belonged, and the community in which you lived.

*Culture.* Another major environmental factor that has shaped your experience and behaviour is the culture to which you belong. In simplest terms, culture is a way of life shared by a large group of people. For example, nearly all Canadians share a common language, use the same system of money, weights and measures, dress somewhat alike, and have certain political ideals in common. These ways of life, shared by nearly all Canadians, make up the Canadian culture.

At the same time, within the Canadian culture, there are a number of sub-cultures or smaller groups. For example, there are groups composed of people of different ethnic backgrounds, different religious backgrounds, different social class backgrounds, different geographical backgrounds, and different age backgrounds. The cultures of the groups to which you belong, as well as the Canadian culture, have influenced your development in many ways.

They have influenced such things as your attitudes toward money, education, comfort, sexual behaviour and politics. They have contributed to your expectations and values. They have influenced the way in which you express your feelings. They have influenced the things that you do. They have also contributed to your philosophy of life.

These are only a few of the ways in which your environment has affected your development. There are many others. And often you may not even be aware that you are being influenced. By becoming more aware of the sources of your behaviours, attitudes, values and expectations, you can gain greater control over what happens to you. In other words, you can decide for yourself what you want to become rather than just being at the mercy of your surroundings.

## **EXAMINING YOUR ROLES**

Were you thinking about your own experiences as you read the previous sections? For example, did you think about the numerous roles you have assumed during your years of growing up — e.g., son daughter, brother/sister, friend, neighbor, student, classmate, club member, church member, athlete, part-time employee, community volunteer, etc.? Did you think about the things you found satisfying and not so satisfying in each of these roles? Perhaps you did. And if you didn't, you should think about them now.

Exploring roles is one way of finding at least partial answers to the question, "Who am I?" But it can help you do more than merely establish your sense of identity. As you think about the things that you have found satisfying and unsatisfying in your different roles, you can obtain valuable information about your needs. For example, the role of friend may be important to you because it satisfies your need for affection. Perhaps it satisfies your need to be needed by someone else. Or maybe it satisfies your need to be recognized and respected by someone else.

But in the next several years, your present role patterns are going to be changing. You will be assuming some new roles, such as those of parent, spouse and full-time worker. You will be discarding some of your present roles, such as those of student and classmate. Other roles, such as those of son/daughter and brother/sister may become less important.

Once you have thoroughly examined your present roles, then, you should take your exploration one step further. What do you want to become? What new roles do you want to assume? Which of

your present roles do you want to discard? Which of your present roles do you want to maintain? What satisfactions do you expect to receive from each of these roles? What must you do in order to obtain those satisfactions?

Now, it's quite possible that you are not going to be able to answer some of these questions right away. For example, you may think that you want to be a parent someday, but you probably have little idea of what to expect in terms of satisfactions. This is where other people can help you. Talk to your own parents, your teachers, counsellors and neighbors about their experiences. And as they describe some of the things they have found frustrating and gratifying, try to assess your own feelings. Is this what I want? or do I want something different?

And whatever you decide, remember this. People rarely get what they want through "wishful thinking". They get what they want by taking active steps in pursuit of their goals.

At the same time, keep in mind another point. Just as the occupation you choose will subsequently affect your lifestyle, so the choices you make about the roles you want to assume will affect your occupational decision. For example, if it's very important to you to be able to have a lot of time to pursue different sports activities, you are going to have to take this into account when you are choosing your life's work. Similarly, if it's very important to you to choose an occupation in which, for example, you have lots of opportunities for travel, you may have to make compromises in your life outside of work.

## SURVEYING YOUR LIFE'S ACTIVITIES

As they are growing up, some people have the opportunity to try out many different roles. Others don't. If you are in the latter group, you may not have been able to obtain a very clear picture of yourself when you examined your roles. But there are other ways of approaching self-appraisal, and one of these is described in the following sections. In this instance, you will be examining your life's activities from a number of different perspectives. By applying yourself conscientiously to this task, you should obtain a number of helpful clues about the kind of person you really are.

### Step 1: List Major Activities Undertaken

You should begin by preparing an inventory of all the major

activities you have undertaken. This task will be easier if you list your activities under headings like the ones shown here:

1. Work Experiences (include odd jobs, part-time jobs, regular work for pay, on-the-job training)
2. Club and Volunteer Activities
3. Hobbies, Sports and Recreational Activities
4. Home Activities (include duties, entertainment, etc.)
5. School Activities (include extra-curricular activities)
6. Attending School (list courses taken)

It shouldn't take you too long to complete this inventory, but try to be as thorough as you can. If you have a lot of activities to examine, you are more likely to be able to identify some important things about yourself.

### **Step 2: Assess Your Interest in Each of These Activities**

Interests are a good starting point for self-appraisal when you are using an inventory approach. They reflect your feelings of like or dislike for the various kinds of activities in which you have taken part.

Let's look, first of all, at your work experiences. Part-time, summer or odd jobs that you have enjoyed or things such as plant tours that you have liked can give you some insights into your occupational preferences. But don't just stop your exploration with the activity as a whole. Break it down into the different things that you did and think about each of them. For example, suppose that you had worked as a playground attendant one summer. The parts of your job that you enjoyed most might have been organizing and carrying out games with the children. You might have intensely disliked repairing the playground equipment and cleaning up. What does this suggest to you?

Now examine your club and volunteer activities. The specific purposes of the organizations to which you belong may suggest some interests. The very fact that you want to belong to and work for certain groups indicates that you have strong social interests.

And what about the way you spend your leisure time? Hobbies like woodworking, sewing and fixing up cars are very obvious clues to occupational interests. Similarly, for some people, extensive participation in a wide variety of sports activities provides clues.

The kinds of reading you enjoy, as well as the fact that you like reading as an activity, can give evidence of occupational interests. For example, do you pick up science or mechanics magazines when

you're at a stand? What sections of the magazines that arrive at your home do you read? What sections of the newspaper do you read? What kind of books do you buy? Even if you don't like reading or even if you only read comic books, this suggests something about you. It suggests that you should avoid those occupations which will require extensive studying and reading.

Now, when you're exploring such things as your hobbies and other leisure-time activities, keep this point in mind. Some of the interests you identify may be only passing fancies. For example, you could become very interested in crocheting because everyone is doing it. Once it's no longer the fad, however, you may discard it.

To check on the depth of your interest in any of the activities you have listed, you could ask yourself some questions like this: How long have I had this interest? Do I talk enthusiastically about it when I'm with other people? How much time and effort have I given to pursuing this activity?

Next, consider your home activities. What do you do there? What do you enjoy doing? What do you not enjoy doing? Some people may not see any relationship between what they do at home and their occupational interests. Yet there often can be. Studies have found that many of the skills used in housekeeping and managing a household are similar to those used by workers.

Extra-curricular activities at school furnish another important indication of interests. For example, the person who participates in sports, works on the newspaper, arranges trips and dances, or is a member of the debating team shows an interest that might well be used in occupational fields later on.

Finally, look at your study activities. The curriculum you are taking may be one indication of your interests. For example, if you are enrolled in an academic program, it might suggest that you are interested in occupations for which a university education is a requirement of entry. The courses you are taking within the curriculum may be another indication of your preferences. For example, you may elect to take art or music instead of home economics or industrial arts. What does this suggest to you? Situations where you must choose from a number of options often provide excellent information on the nature of your interests.

### **Step 3: Assess Your Performance in Each of These Activities**

Your interests are good indicators of some of the things you might want from your work. Similarly, your past performance in the

various activities you have listed may provide some clues about what you are capable of doing.

So, just as you examined your interests, now you must explore your achievements in each of the activities you have undertaken. Here are some questions to guide you. First, are there some tasks that you have done particularly well? Write them down. Second, are there some tasks that other people have commended you for doing well? Write them down. Third, are there some things that you have learned to do very quickly? Write them down. At the same time, consider those tasks that you have not done well and those that you have been criticized for doing poorly. Also identify the things that you have had difficulty in learning. When you are trying to find clues that will help you in eventually choosing an occupation, you must consider your weak points as well as your strong ones.

#### **Step 4: Identify Personal Character Traits Shown in These Activities**

To succeed in a job, you must get along with your employer and co-workers. Studies of success and failure in work have shown that lack of ability to do the job is the cause of only about fifteen per cent of all firings and dismissals. Among the common reasons given for firing a worker are too frequent absence from work, habitual lateness, making trouble among co-workers, dishonesty, unreliability and loafing. Undoubtedly, these bad work habits are acquired earlier in life.

To get along with others on the job, you need to show interest, consideration and courtesy toward them. To keep the job and advance to better positions, you need to do other things. For example, you need to display good judgment. You must be willing to do more than the actual requirements of the job. You must be open to suggestions for improvement. You must also show continued improvement in your work and self-development.

In this part of your self-analysis, you are going to be examining how you have behaved as you have engaged in your different activities. More specifically, you are going to be looking for evidence of good and bad work habits. You are going to be looking for evidence of maturity and immaturity in your relations with other people. You are also going to be looking for evidence of your ability or inability to adjust to different situations.

This information will help you in two ways. First of all, it will help you determine some occupations for which you might be suited. For example, suppose that you are able to stay calm and make good decisions when emergencies arise. What occupations might require this quality in its workers? You can probably think of several possibilities.

This information can also help you recognize changes that you are going to have to make in your present ways of behaving. For example, if you are habitually late for whatever you are doing, you are going to have to work hard to break this habit. Being on time is a requirement for success in most jobs.

Now, what are some of the things you might identify as evidence of your work habits? These might appear in such acts as planning things in advance, keeping your work area neat and orderly, completing tasks that you start, showing initiative in seeking out jobs, getting school assignments in on time, obeying safety regulations, taking responsibility, and so on. For each of the activities you have engaged in, you should be able to provide examples of good and bad work habits.

Next, consider the ways in which you have related to other people in the past. For example, how do you get along with your parents, teachers, classmates, fellow club members, etc.? Do you make friends easily? Do you take part in class discussions? Do you find it easy to talk to people you don't know? Do you praise people for things they have done well or are you inclined to be very critical? Do you respect people's confidences? Are you able to put other people at ease? Do you understand their feelings and problems? Do you ever take the lead in directing group activities? These are just some of the things you might uncover as you look for evidence of your social maturity or immaturity.

Finally, look at each of your activities in terms of your ability or inability to adjust to different situations. This quality could be reflected in such things as self-confidence, finishing work that you started, being able to remain calm under pressure, taking criticism well, respecting people in authority, taking instructions from more than one person, concentrating on your work, and so on. How well are you able to do some of these things? That is what you must find out as you examine the ways you have behaved in past activities.

Now, this is a second place where people who know you well can probably help you. Talk to them. Find out what they thought about

your behaviour in different activities. They might be able to give you some ideas that you would never have considered otherwise.

As well, talking to people at this point can serve another useful purpose. It can help to clear up any differences between the way you think you behave and the way others see your behaviour. For example, you might feel that you are easy-going. Others may see you as something quite different. They might think that you are merely careless. What will you do? Will you assume that you are right and they are wrong, and continue to behave in the same way? Or will you attempt to change?

### **Step 5: Organize the Information from your Self-Analysis**

As a result of examining your life's activities from the three perspectives described here, you should have a lot of information on yourself. But if you are going to use this information in your search for occupational possibilities, you need to put it into a manageable form.

First, look at the things you **want** from work. In the approach presented here, these are the things that you are interested in doing. Take a sheet of paper and put two columns on it; Things I Want From Work and Things I Do Not Want From Work. Now, go back over your lists, and each time you come across an interest that fits in the first column, put it down there. If something more properly belongs in the second column, put it there.

Second, look at the things that you **can** do, based on your performance in past activities. Again, take a sheet of paper and put two columns on it: Things I Can Do and Things I Cannot Do. Then, go back over your lists just as you did before, and pick out appropriate information for each column.

Finally, consider your character traits or ways of behaving in terms of "I Am" and "I Am Not". When the entries are complete, you will have information on your work habits, how you relate to other people, and how you adjust to different situations.

## **USING YOUR INFORMATION**

I am . . . I need . . . I want . . . I can . . . I should . . . I feel . . . I believe . . . How simple these phrases sound. Yet people use them over and over again when they are describing something that is very complicated. They use them when they are describing what they are really like as individuals.

Can you describe yourself using these terms right now? If you have followed the guidelines presented in this chapter, you probably can. But what will you do with this self-information?

You will do a number of things. You will use this information when you are determining your life's goals. You will use it when you are searching for occupational possibilities. You will use it when you are evaluating alternatives and deciding. You will also use this information as the basis for planning changes in yourself.

## SUMMARY

Self-appraisal is a very important part of your preparation for choosing an occupation. It enables you to discover what is important to you and what you would like to do. It enables you to discover what you are capable of doing. When you know these things about yourself, it is easier to make good decisions.

The kind of person you are depends partly on your heredity and partly on your environment, or your experiences and activities in growing up. Two ways that you can come to know yourself better and (1) by making an inventory of your life's experiences and activities, and (2) by talking to people who know you well.

A good way to explore your life's experiences is to look at the different roles you have assumed at various times. Some of these roles will have been satisfying and some not so satisfying. This can provide you with useful clues about the kind of person you want to become.

Similarly, by examining your life's activities for evidence of your interests, abilities and personal character traits, you can obtain information that will be useful in exploring occupational possibilities. It will also be useful in evaluating your alternatives and planning self-changes.

It is easier to do a personal inventory if you consult other people while you are doing it. They can provide you with useful facts on things that you know nothing about. They can also help you ensure that the information you collect on yourself is accurate.



# **CHAPTER SIX**



**EXPLORING SELF  
IN RELATION  
TO OCCUPATIONS**

You have surveyed your life's experiences and activities. You have talked to people who know you well. And as a result of doing these things, you should have collected a lot of valuable self-information. For example, you should now have a better idea of what you want from life. You should also have a clearer picture of your interests, aptitudes and character traits.

As you have already seen, you can use this information in a number of ways. You can use it when you are determining your life's goals. You can use it when you are searching for occupational possibilities. You can use it when you are evaluating alternatives and deciding. You can also use this information as the basis for planning changes in yourself.

But let's examine the information for a few minutes. Is it complete? For example, have you thought about the kind of physical environment in which you would like to work? Have you thought about the amount of time you are prepared to devote to preparation for an occupation? Have you thought about your physical and mental capacity to do things that you have not yet experienced? Probably not. And let's face it, for some of these things it might be difficult to say what you want or what you are capable of doing unless you know what to expect.

This chapter more or less describes what work is like. For example, it describes work in terms of the physical activities that may be involved. It describes work in terms of the environmental surroundings in which it may be done. It describes work in terms of the levels of education and amount of preparation time required. It also describes work in terms of the functions that workers may perform, and the interest, aptitude and personality patterns they may exhibit.

Now, one of the things you probably already realize is that this description of work is going to vary considerably from occupation to occupation. For example, the environment in which gravel is shovelled is not going to be the same as the one in which a letter is typed. Or the level of education required to be a college instructor is not going to be the same as the one required to be an automotive mechanic. In other words, just as you have a profile of characteristics that is a bit different from everyone else's, so each occupation must have a profile that is a bit different from every other occupation's.

These profiles, or *occupational qualification requirements* as they are called, are given in Volume 2 of the **Canadian Classification**

**and Dictionary of Occupations.** You will learn more about this Dictionary as you read this chapter. But let's turn our attention to another matter right now.

Is there some way that you could develop a personal profile that could later be matched against occupational qualifications profiles? Indeed there is. And the way in which this can be done is by taking certain tests and inventories, and by completing the checklists described below.

## **APTITUDES DESCRIBED**

A wide range of aptitudes are represented in nearly every occupation. And most likely, the ones you possess will be given a lot of consideration when you are making educational and occupational decisions.

What is an aptitude? It is defined as the ability to do or to learn quickly the skills required for performing certain tasks or job duties. For example, suppose that you have a numerical aptitude. What does this mean? It simply means that you can add, subtract, multiply and divide quickly and accurately. Or if you can't already do it, you at least have the ability to learn to do so without too much trouble.

You have already looked at one way of measuring your aptitudes. That was by examining your performance in past activities. A second way in which aptitudes can be measured is through standardized tests.

By themselves, aptitude test scores cannot help you determine the occupation for which you would be most suited. They are just one tool for guiding your exploration of occupational alternatives. As well, you should always consider your aptitudes in relation to other things such as your personal interests, preferences and motivation.

One of the best ways to use aptitude test scores is in assessing the risks involved in choosing one occupation over another. For example, if your test scores are low when compared with the aptitude levels given for a particular occupation, it might indicate a higher likelihood of failure. If you were to enter that occupation, you might find yourself at a disadvantage in having to compete with workers of higher ability, particularly in matters related to promotion and advancement. But this is not to suggest that you could not overcome this difficulty. Indeed, many people have successfully entered and remained in occupations by simply studying harder

and raising their grades in school or by working harder on the job.

On the other hand, if you were to enter an occupation in which most workers have aptitude ratings below yours, you might become bored. You might find that neither your work nor your work associates are very satisfying. Do you now see why it is important to consider more than just the test scores themselves?

**The Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations** (CCDO) gives an estimate of the aptitudes required for thousands of occupations. These estimates were drawn from the results of the **General Aptitude Test Battery** (GATB) which was given to workers in different occupations. The eleven aptitudes described in the CCDO include:

1. *G — General Learning Ability.* The ability to "catch on" or to understand instructions and the principles underlying things. Ability to reason and make judgments. This aptitude relates closely to know how well you do in your school subjects.
2. *V — Verbal Aptitude.* Ability to understand meanings of words and ideas associated with them, and to use them well. Ability to understand language, to understand relationships between words, and to understand the meaning of whole sentences and paragraphs. Ability to present information or ideas clearly in either oral or written form.
3. *N — Numerical Aptitude.* Ability to do arithmetic operations like adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing quickly and correctly.
4. *S — Spatial Relationships.* Ability to picture things in three dimensions. Ability to understand the relationships among moving objects in space, e.g., pulleys. May be used in tasks such as reading blueprints, solving geometry problems and driving a car.
5. *P — Form Perception.* Ability to see important detail in objects, pictures or graphs. Ability to see likenesses and differences in shapes and shadings of figures, and lengths and widths or lines.
6. *Q — Clerical Perception.* Ability to see detail in written material or material presented in tables. Ability to see differences in copy, to proofread words and numbers, and to avoid errors in doing simple arithmetic.
7. *K — Motor Coordination.* Ability to coordinate eyes and hands or fingers rapidly and accurately in making precise movements

with speed. May be used in a task like stopping a car quickly when the traffic light turns red.

8. F — *Finger Dexterity*. Ability to move the fingers and handle small objects with the fingers rapidly or accurately. May be used in tasks like typing, sewing and playing the violin.
9. M — *Manual Dexterity*. Ability to move the hands easily and skillfully. To work with the hands in placing and turning motions. May be used in a task like picking up food cans and placing them on a shelf.
10. E — *Eye-hand-foot Coordination*. Ability to move the hand and foot with each other in accordance with visual stimuli, e.g., moving to the proper position to hit a tennis ball. (Not measured in GATB)
11. C - *Colour Discrimination*. Ability to recognize likenesses and differences in colours or in shades or other values of the same colour. (Not measured in GATB).

Except for general learning ability, five levels are used in the CCDO to show the extent of each aptitude required in an occupation. For general learning ability, the two lowest levels are combined into one to give four rather than five levels. The aptitude levels that are used include:

1. The top 10% of the working population in this aptitude.
2. The upper third, exclusive of the top 10% of the population. This group possesses an above average or high degree of the aptitude.
3. The middle third of the working population. This group has a medium degree of the aptitude, ranging from slightly below to slightly above average.
4. The lowest third, exclusive of the bottom 10% of the population.
5. The lowest 10% of the population in this aptitude.

A digit (1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5) indicates the level or how much of each aptitude the occupation requires for satisfactory performance. In the CCDO, aptitudes for each occupation are presented in coded form like this:

G	V	N	S	P	Q	K	F	M	E	C
3	4	4	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	5	3	4	<u>3</u>	4	5

The underlining of an aptitude rating simply indicates that the

aptitude is considered significant for satisfactory job performance.

To obtain your own levels for each of the aptitudes described in the CCDO, you can do one of two things. First, you can take the General Aptitude Test Battery. It is administered to clients at all Canada Manpower Centres and to students in many high schools and colleges.

When you take the GATB, you obtain scores for all of the aptitudes described in the CCDO except E — Eye-hand-foot Coordination — and C — Colour Discrimination. To change your scores to the levels described in the CCDO, use this table:

### Changing GATB Scores to Aptitude Levels

Score	Level
over 126	1
110 to 126	2
92 to 109	3
75 to 91	4
0 to 74	5

If you do this, don't forget that General Learning Ability is rated on a 1 - 4 scale. This means that a score between 0 and 92 is described as being at Level 4.

Sometimes it is not possible to make arrangements to take the **General Aptitude Test Battery**. If this is the case, carefully read the descriptions for each aptitude presented here. Then estimate what your levels would be. Research has shown that many people can determine their levels for each aptitude quite accurately without taking the test.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING TIME DESCRIBED

Almost all types of work will require you to undertake some form of preparation. In the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**, this is called *training time*.

Training time is considered to be the amount of *general education development* and *specific vocational preparation* needed by a worker to obtain the knowledge and skills s/he requires to do a certain job. General education development (GED) includes all educational experiences which contribute to a worker's skills in reasoning, mathematics and language. It includes elementary and secondary school, as well as further education which is **not** directed toward a

specific job. It may also include experience and self-study. In the CCDO, general education development appears like this:

Levels	Approximate Duration of Schooling
6	17 years plus
5	13 to 16 years
4	11 to 12 years
3	9 to 10 years
2	7 to 8 years
1	Up to and including 6 years

Can you estimate your GED level from the description given here?

Specific vocational preparation (SVP) is a term used to describe the time required to learn the knowledge and skills required for average performance in a specific job. Such preparation could be obtained in school, on the job, or from other sources. Any of the following situations could give specific vocational preparation for a job:

- University or college training
- Vocational training
- Apprentice training
- In-plant training
- On-the-job training
- Experience in other jobs

In the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**, specific vocational preparation is divided into nine ranges of time. It extends from "over 10 years" at the most advanced level downward to "short demonstration only". The nine ranges are:

- 9 — over 10 years
- 8 — over 4 years up to and including 10 years
- 7 — over 2 years up to and including 4 years
- 6 — over 1 year up to and including 2 years
- 5 — over 6 months up to and including 1 year
- 4 — over 3 months up to and including 6 months
- 3 — over 30 days up to and including 3 months
- 2 — anything beyond Short Demonstration up to and including 30 days
- 1 — Short Demonstration only

Can you estimate your SVP level from the description given here?

GED and SVP levels are both subject to change as a result of taking further education and training. Therefore, you should do

two things when you are exploring occupational possibilities by these factors. First, assess your present level of education and training and determine what opportunities this affords. Then, consider the opportunities that would be available to you if you took further education and training. Here you will want to consider additional matters such as money, geographic location, family responsibilities, motivation, and aptitude.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED

A certain amount of physical activity is required in any job. In exploring occupations, therefore, you will want to consider the kind of physical work you **want** to do and the kind of physical work you **are able** to do.

In the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**, physical activities refer to the demands of a job on three things: (1) body movement; (2) the senses of seeing, hearing and touching; and (3) speaking. The following factors are then used to describe physical activities in the occupational qualifications profiles:

1. *Strength* (Sedentary, Light, Medium, Heavy, Very Heavy Work): This factor appears as an initial (S, L, M, H, or VH) in an occupational description.

**S — Sedentary Work.** A sedentary occupation is one that involves a lot of sitting. A certain amount of walking and standing is necessary and small articles such as tools, merchandise and files weighing up to 10 lbs. may have to be lifted or carried.

**L — Light Work.** Work in this category requires frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects weighing up to 10 lbs. It requires occasional lifting and or carrying of objects weighing up to a maximum of 20 lbs. An occupation is also in this category (a) when it requires considerable walking or standing; and (b) when it involves pushing or pulling arm and or leg controls.

**M — Medium Work.** Work in this category requires frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects weighing up to 20 lbs. It requires occasional lifting and or carrying of objects weighing up to a maximum of 50 lbs. Extensive use of arm and or leg controls may also be involved.

**H — Heavy Work.** Work in this category involves frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 lbs. or more. It requires occasional lifting and or carrying of objects weighing over 100 lbs.

The descriptions given for "Strength" make reference to "lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling" objects. These activities can be described as follows:

**Lifting:** Raising or lowering an object from one level or another (includes upward pulling).

**Carrying:** Transporting an object, usually holding it in the hands or arms or on the shoulder.

**Pushing:** Exerting force upon an object so that it moves away from the force (includes slapping, striking, kicking and treadle actions).

**Pulling:** Exerting force upon an object so that it moves toward the force (includes jerking).

**2. Climbing and or Balancing.** For climbing, the emphasis is placed upon body agility; for balancing, it is placed upon body equilibrium.

**Climbing:** Going up or down ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles, ropes, and the like; using the feet and legs and/or hands and arms.

**Balancing:** Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on narrow, slippery, or eratically moving surfaces; or maintaining body equilibrium when doing gymnastics.

**3. Stooping, Kneeling, Crouching and/or Crawling:** The activities described here involve full use of the body's lower extermities as well as back muscles.

**Stooping:** Bending the body downward and forward by bending the spine at the waist.

**Kneeling:** Bending the legs at the knees to come to rest on the knee or knees.

**Crouching:** Bending the body downward and forward by bending the legs and spine.

**Crawling:** Moving about on the hands and knees or hands and feet.

4. *Reaching, Handling, Fingering, and/or Feeling:* These activities involve the use of one or both the upper extremities.

*Reaching:* Extending the hands and arms in any direction.

*Handling:* Seizing, holding, grasping, turning, or otherwise working with the hand or hands (fingering not involved).

*Fingering:* Picking, pinching, or otherwise working with the fingers primarily (rather than with the whole hand or arm as in handling).

*Feeling:* Being aware of qualities of objects and materials such as size, shape, temperature, or texture by means of receptors in the skin, particularly those of the finger tips.

*H – Heavy Work.* Work in this category involves frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 lbs. or more. It requires occasional lifting and or carrying of objects weighing over 100 lbs.

*M – Medium Work.* Work in this category requires frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects weighing up to 20 lbs. It requires occasional lifting and or carrying of objects weighing up to a maximum of 50 lbs. Extensive use of arm and/or leg controls may also be involved.

5. *Talking:* Talking is important for those activities in which the worker must give oral information or oral instructions clearly and accurately to other people.

6. *Hearing:* Hearing is important for those activities in which oral information must be received and understood, or in which fine discriminations in sound must be made.

7. *Seeing:* Observing the shape, size, distance, motion, colour or other characteristics of objects is considered under these component factors:

<i>Acuity, Far:</i>	The ability to see clearly at 20 feet or more.
<i>Acuity, Near:</i>	The ability to see clearly at 20 feet or less.
<i>Depth Perception:</i>	The ability to judge distance and space relationships in three dimensions.
<i>Accommodation:</i>	The ability to adjust the eye to bring an object into focus, especially when doing close-up work at varying distances from the eye.

*Colour Vision:* The ability to identify and distinguish colours and shades of colours.

*Field of Vision:* The area that can be seen up or down, right or left, while the eyes are fixed on a given point.

From these descriptions, can you determine the physical activities you are capable of doing? Can you determine the ones you would want to do in your work?

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS DESCRIBED**

Environmental conditions refer to the physical surroundings encountered by a worker in a specific occupation. They should also be considered before you make an occupational choice.

Descriptions of environmental conditions as they appear in the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations** are given below:

1. *Work Location* (inside, outside or both): This factor appears as an initial (I, O, or B) on an occupational description.

I — *Inside*: Protection from weather conditions, but not necessarily from temperature changes. An occupation is considered "inside" if the workers spend approximately 75 per cent or more of their time inside.

O — *Outside*: No effective protection from weather. An occupation is considered "outside" if the workers spend about 75 per cent or more of their time outside.

B — *Both*: Inside and outside. An occupation is considered "both" if the workers' activities occur inside and outside in about equal amounts.

2. *Extremes of Cold Plus Temperature Changes*:

a. *Extremes of Cold*: Temperatures sufficiently low to cause marked bodily discomfort unless the worker is provided with exceptional protection.

b. *Temperature Changes*: Changes in temperature which are sufficiently marked and abrupt to cause noticeable bodily reactions.

3. *Extremes of Heat Plus Temperature Changes*:

a. *Extremes of Heat*: Temperature sufficiently high to cause

marked bodily discomfort unless the worker is provided with exceptional protection.

b. *Temperature Changes:* Same as 2.b.

4. *Wet and/or Humid:* Contact with water or other liquids, and/or atmospheric conditions with moisture content sufficiently high to cause marked bodily discomfort.
5. *Noise and/or Vibration:* Noise is sufficient to cause distraction or possible injury to one's hearing. Vibration from repeated motion or shock is sufficient to cause bodily harm if endured day after day.
6. *Hazards:* These are situations in which a worker is exposed to the definite risk of bodily injury by mechanical or electrical means or from burns, explosives or radiation.
7. *Atmospheric Conditions:* Fumes, odours, toxic conditions, dust, and poor ventilation.

*Fumes:* Smoky or vaporous exhalations, usually odorous, thrown off as the result of combustion or chemical reaction.

*Odours:* Noxious smells, either toxic or non-toxic.

*Toxic Conditions:* Exposure to toxic dust, fumes, gases, vapours, mists, or liquids which cause general or localized disabling conditions as a result of inhalation or action on the skin.

*Dust:* Air filled with small particles of any kind such as textile dust, flour, wood, leather or feathers, and inorganic dust including silica and asbestos, which make the work place unpleasant or are sources of occupational diseases.

When you are exploring occupations on the environmental factors described here, you should consider at least two things. First, you should think about the kind of environment in which you would like to work. Second, you should give consideration to the kind of environment in which you are capable of working. For example, if you are troubled by allergies, you might be unable to work in an environment in which there is a lot of dust.

But a word of caution is required here. Many people eliminate occupations from further consideration as soon as they find out what the working environment is like. This is unwise. Other features of the work such as high rates of pay and pleasant work associations could compensate for the unpleasant conditions. It is

also possible for many of the conditions described here to be modified through efforts taken by individual companies to reduce hazards and thus insure the safety of their workers.

## INTEREST PATTERNS DESCRIBED

An interest is a liking for something. In an interest inventory, it indicates your preference for one person, thing or activity over other persons, things or activities.

Interests are important in making an occupational choice. For one thing, you are more likely to be satisfied with a job if your work activities are interesting to you. For another, it has been found that people in particular occupations have similar sets of interests. Therefore, their interest patterns are a bit different from those of people in other occupations.

Five pairs of opposite interests are used in the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations. These pairs are: (1) things and objects versus people; (2) business contact versus scientific interests; (3) interest in business detail versus abstract and creative interests; (4) social welfare interest versus non-social interest; and (5) prestige interest versus tangible, productive interest. In most cases, a liking for a specific type of activity is associated with a dislike of its opposite. Here are some examples of job activities related to each of the interest factors:

1. *Situations involving a preference for activities dealing with things and objects*  
Operates a machine; keeps records; examines and tests components for manufacturing; assembles components; checks supplies in and out; calculates prices or rates; makes scale drawings.
2. *Situations involving a preference for activities involving business contact with people.*
6. *Situations involving a preference for activities concerned with people and the communication of ideas.*  
Writes for a newspaper; gives instruction in music; lectures; acts in films or theatre; reads and classifies reports and records; interviews clients to obtain information; trains animals or people for specific skills.
7. *Situations involving a preference for activities of scientific and technical nature.*

Supervises the work of others; sells from door to door; acts as a receptionist; runs a telephone switchboard; conducts interviews; makes financial investigations.

Conducts tests and experiments; collects and compares statistics and data; specializes in the production of a particular crop by studying the soil, weather conditions, and different fertilizers; illustrates scientific books; develops new products and processes.

3. *Situations involving a preference for activities of routine, concrete, organized nature.*

Keeps files; inspects products in manufacturing; supplies another worker or a machine with materials; operates a machine which involves regular movements; types addresses and financial records; cultivates and harvests farm products.

8. *Situations involving a preference for activities of an abstract and creative nature.*

Conducts scientific experiments and research to prove facts of nature or to discover new products and methods; creates new hair styles to meet individual needs and appearance; designs clothes; writes original plays.

4. *Situations involving a preference for working with people for their presumed good as in the social welfare sense, or for dealing with people and language in social situations.*

Organizes recreational groups; counsels people with problems; assists people to find jobs; serves people in a medical or religious way; works with handicapped people.

9. *Situations involving a preference for activities that are nonsocial in nature, and are carried on in relation to processes, machines and techniques.*

Tends and regulates radio and television broadcasting equipment; makes ready and tends printing presses; makes clothing to fit individuals; sets up and operates surveying machines repairs, tests and adjusts instruments and machines.

5. *Situations involving a preference for work resulting in prestige or the esteem of others.*

0. *Situations involving a preference for work leading to satisfaction from tangible results.*

Helps to determine a company's policy; teaches school and administers school business; acts as a spokesman or agent for a union, company or committee; conducts financial investigations; manages a business.

Carries out a number of varied operations which lead to a finished product — making furniture; creating jewelery or house bric-a-brac; making false teeth from dental impressions; preparing baked goods; installing appliances in cars or houses; mounting birds and animals; photographing, developing and printing pictures

To obtain a profile of your interests based on the five pairs of opposite interests used in the CCDO, you can do one of two things. First, you can complete the **Canadian Occupational Interest Inventory** (COII). It is administered to clients in many Canada Manpower Centres and to students in some high schools and colleges.

If you cannot make arrangements to take this inventory, carefully read the descriptions of each bi-polar interest factor presented here. Do you prefer to work with things and objects or with people? Do you prefer activities involving business contact with people or scientific, technical ones? Do you prefer routine activities or abstract, creative ones? Do you prefer work that involves helping people or non-social work? Do you prefer work that gives you respect and status from others or work that enables you to take pride in a finished product? After you have determined your preferences for these activities, rank them in order, starting with the kind of work activity that interests you most. You will then have a profile of your interests like the one you would get from taking the COII.

When you are exploring occupations by interests, there are a number of things you should consider. First, it is highly likely that you will have more than one strong interest. For example, you may be highly interested in activities involving business contact with people. You

may also be very interested in activities which enable you to see the results of your work quite readily. In this case, you may wish to seek an occupation that satisfies both interests.

But what happens if you cannot find an occupation that satisfies all of your interests? Then you must compromise. You must consider which interests are most important to have satisfied on the job, and which ones can be satisfied in activities outside of work.

Finally, having an interest in a certain kind of work activity does not necessarily mean that you can do it. Therefore, you must also consider other factors such as your aptitudes, motivation, financial situation, and so on.

## TEMPERAMENTS DESCRIBED

It appears that some people are genuinely unsuited for certain occupations. Why is this so?

Many reasons could be given. They may be totally disinterested in the type of work that must be done. They may have neither the physical nor mental ability to perform the work satisfactorily. But more than likely, they are unsuited for the occupation because they lack the temperamental qualities or personality traits required of its workers. For example, could you picture persons who are shy and retiring being very successful selling cars in a used car lot? Probably not. Chances are they would have a difficult time adjusting to this work activity.

The approach used in the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations** has been to identify those persistent characteristics of a certain kind of work which require a particular kind of response from the workers. While these characteristics of the work are not temperaments, the personality traits that make it possible for the person to meet such work demands can be so considered. In the CCDO, twelve different types of work situations to which workers must adjust in different occupations have been identified:

1. *Situations involving a variety of duties which may change frequently.*

Examples: General office work — types letters, distributes mail, gives information to customers, keeps small accounts, operates calculators, maintains files, orders supplies; General farm work — operates machinery such as trucks, tractors and combines, repairs machinery, repairs barns, livestock pens and fences.

2. *Situations involving repetitive or short cycle operations carried out according to set procedures or in a certain order.*

Examples: Removes letters from a conveyor belt, sorts them by destination, and puts them in labelled bags; takes old tires off automobile rims and installs new tires; operates an elevator; uses a power saw to fell trees and cut the limbs off; binds books by placing them in a machine, holding them there for a timed period and removing them.

3. *Situations involving doing things only under specific instructions, allowing little or no room for independent action or judgment in working out job problems.*

Examples: Types envelopes from a prepared list of addresses; takes orders for meals from customers and places prepared plates on the counter in a cafeteria; puts required amounts of gas into cars.

4. *Situations involving responsibility for planning, directing and controlling an entire activity or the activities of others.*

Examples: Plans and supervises the construction of a house; operates a business; directs the planning and maintenance of a community parks department.

5. *Situations involving the necessity of dealing with people in actual job duties beyond giving and receiving instructions.*

Examples: Helps to train new workers; manages workers by assigning duties, checking work, keeping time and pay records; works as a receptionist and switchboard operator; interviews people for information to be used in a news story.

6. *Situations involving working alone or apart from others, although the activity may be integrated with that of others.*

Examples: Works as a forest ranger in a remote location; carries mail and delivers it to houses; operates a highway truck as a crew of one; works in a darkroom processing film.

7. *Situations involving influencing people in their opinions, attitudes, or judgments about ideas or things.*

Examples: Prepares advertisements for use in a newspaper; sells new cars or other products directly to customers; makes speeches at various gatherings to promote the sale or acceptance of an article or idea.

8. *Situations involving performing adequately under stress caused by criticism, unexpected events or taking risks.*

Examples: Handles customer complaints and exchanges in a department store; fights fires when there is a risk of injury and where quickness of action may be required; performs surgery on the human body when the consequences of error are great; performs as an athlete or an entertainer before large crowds.

9. *Situations involving the evaluation [arriving at generalizations, judgments or decisions] of information using the senses or personal judgment.*

Examples: Produces baked goods and tests them by tasting, touching and smelling; sets up produce displays by sorting and discarding produce; collects, organizes and interprets scientific information relating to community organizations, social customs, the family, etc. for use by people working on the solution of social problems.

0. *Situations involving the evaluation [arriving at generalizations, judgments or decisions] of information using measurable or verifiable standards.*

Examples: Tests tubes and other parts of television sets to find problems; selects sheets of plywood for proper match when building; fits clothes for customers in a clothing store; diagnoses problems in a car engine and makes appropriate repairs.

- X. *Situations involving the interpretation of feelings, ideas or facts in terms of personal viewpoint.*

Examples: Writes news accounts of sporting events; produces photographic portraits of people; prepares food with personal recipes to meet the needs of special occasions; advises people on proper gifts for occasions.

**Y. Situations involving the precise attainment of set limits, tolerances or standards.**

Examples: Tunes pianos; sketches layouts and letters art work for television advertising; prepares medicine following a doctor's prescription; finishes fine furniture.

Can you identify the work situations to which you could easily adjust? Can you also identify the ones to which you could not adjust easily?

### **DATA-PEOPLE-THINGS DESCRIBED**

Workers in every occupation are involved to some degree with instructions and information (data), with people in the form of the public, supervisors or co-workers (people), and with materials, equipment or products (things). But the complexity of their involvement with Data-People-Things can vary considerably. For example, take the matter of involvement with people. At the simplest level, a worker could be doing something like taking down people's orders for meals in a restaurant. At the most complex level, the worker could be counselling someone on their career plans.

In the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**, Data, People and Things refer to worker functions. And within each of these categories, the functions range from complex to simple, as follows:

Data	People	Things
0 Synthesizing	0 Mentoring	0 Setting up
1 Co-ordinating	1 Negotiating	1 Precision Working
2 Analyzing	2 Instructing	2 Operating-Controlling
3 Compiling	3 Supervising	3 Driving-Operating
4 Computing	4 Diverting	4 Manipulating-Operating
5 Copying	5 Persuading	5 Tending
6 Comparing	6 Speaking-Signalling	6 Feeding-Offbearing
7 -----*	7 Serving	7 Handling
8 No significant relationship	8 No significant relationship	8 No significant relationship

\* The digit 7 in the Data Table has not been used in the present edition of the CCDO.

The terms are arranged in descending order so that as the numbers go up, the level of complexity goes down. Explanations for each of the terms used are given below.

**DATA:** Information, knowledge, and conceptions related to Data, People and Things, obtained by observation, investigation, interpretation, visualization and mental creation; incapable of being touched. Written data take the form of numbers, words and symbols; other data are ideas, concepts and oral verbalization.

- 0 *Synthesizing:* Integrating analyses of data to discover facts and/or develop knowledge, concepts or interpretations.
- 1 *Co-ordinating:* Determining time, place, and sequence of operations or action to be taken on the basis of analysis of data, executing determinations and/or reporting on events.
- 2 *Analyzing:* Examining and evaluating data. Presenting alternative action in relation to the evaluation is frequently involved.
- 3 *Compiling:* Accumulating information which is usually recorded physically, but which may be stored mentally; gathering, collating, or classifying information about Data, People and Things. Reporting and/or carrying out a prescribed action in relation to the information is frequently involved.
- 4 *Computing:* Performing arithmetic operations and reporting on and/or carrying out prescribed action in relation to them. Does not include counting.
- 5 *Copying:* Transcribing, entering, or posting data.
- 6 *Comparing:* Understanding the readily observable functional, structural, or compositional characteristics (whether similar to or divergent from obvious standards) of Data, People, and Things.

**PEOPLE:** Human beings; also includes animals dealt with on an individual basis.

- 0 *Mentoring:* Dealing with individuals in terms of their total personality in order to advise, counsel and/or guide them with regard to problems that may be resolved by legal, scientific, clinical, spiritual and/or other professional principles.
- 1 *Negotiating:* Exchanging ideas, information and opinions with others to formulate policies and programs and/or arrive jointly at decisions, conclusions or solutions.

- 2 *Instructing*: Teaching subject matter to others or training others (including animals) through explanation, demonstration and supervised practice; or making recommendations on the basis of technical disciplines.
- 3 *Supervising*: Determining or interpreting work procedures for a group of workers, assigning specific duties to them, maintaining harmonious relations among them and promoting efficiency.
- 4 *Diverting*: Entertaining others.
- 5 *Persuading*: Influencing others in favour of a product, service or point of view.
- 6 *Speaking-Signaling*: Talking with and/or signaling people to convey or exchange information. Includes giving assignments and/or directions to helpers or assistants, but excludes ordinary conversation.
- 7 *Serving*: Attending to the needs or requests of people or animals, or the expressed or implicit wishes of people. Immediate response is involved.

**THINGS:** Inanimate objects as distinguished from human beings; substances or materials; machines, tools, or equipment; products. A thing is tangible and has shape, form, and other physical characteristics.

- 0 *Setting Up*: Adjusting machines or equipment by replacing or altering tools, jigs, fixtures and attachments to prepare them to perform their functions, change their performance, or restore their functions, change their performance, or restore their proper functioning if they break down. Workers who set up one or a number of machines for other workers or who set up and personally operate a variety of machines are included here.
- 1 *Precision Working*: Using body members and/or tools or work aids to work, move, guide or place objects or materials in situations where ultimate responsibility for the attainment of standards occurs and selection of appropriate tools, objects, or materials, and the adjustment of the tool to the task require exercise of considerable judgment.
- 2 *Operating-Controlling*: Starting, stopping, controlling and adjusting the progress of machines or equipment designed to fabricate and/or process objects or materials. Operating machines involves setting up the machine and adjusting the machine or material as the work progresses. Controlling

equipment involves observing gauges, dials and other indicators, and turning valves and other devices to control such factors as temperature, pressure, flow of liquids, speed of pumps, and reactions of materials. Set-up involves several variables, and adjustment is more frequent than in tending.

- 3 *Driving-Operating:* Starting, stopping and controlling the actions of machines or equipment, for which a course must be steered or which must be guided, in order to fabricate, process, and/or move things or people. Involves such activities as observing gauges and dials; estimating distances and determining speed and direction of other objects; turning cranks and wheels; pushing clutches or brakes; and pushing or pulling gear shifts or levers. Includes such machines as cranes, conveyor systems, tractors, furnace-changing machines, paving machines and hoisting machines. Excludes manually-powered machines, such as handtrucks and dollies, and power-assisted machines, such as electric wheelbarrows and handtrucks.
- 4 *Manipulating-Operating:* Using body members, tools, or special devices to work, move, guide, or place objects or materials requiring the use of hand tools or special devices. Requires a significant combination of eye-hand co-ordination, and manual and finger dexterity. Involves some latitude for judgment with regard to precision attained and selection of appropriate tool, object or material, although this is readily manifest.
- 5 *Tending:* Starting, stopping, and observing the functioning of machines and equipment. Involves adjusting materials or controls of the machine, such as changing guides, adjusting timers and temperature gauges, turning valves to allow flow of materials and flipping switches in response to lights. Little judgment is involved in making these adjustments.
- 6 *Feeding-Offbearing:* Inserting, throwing, dumping, or placing materials in or removing them from machines or equipment which are automatic or tended or operated by other workers.
- 7 *Handling:* Using body members, hand tools and /or special devices to work, move, or carry objects or materials. Involves little or no latitude for judgment with regard to attainment of standards or in selecting appropriate tool, object or material.

## **COMPILING AND CHECKING YOUR INFORMATION**

By the time you have completed the tests, inventories and check-

lists described here, you will have collected a lot of self-information. For example, you will have information on your aptitudes, interests, levels of education and training, and temperamental qualities. You will have information on your preferences for such things as the physical environment in which you might work. You will also have information on your capacity to work under certain conditions and circumstances.

What you must do at this point is put your information into a manageable form. One of the best ways to do this is to arrange it in a number of categories. The first category could include those things that you **want** from work, or your preferences. For example, you could describe your interests here. You could describe the physical environment in which you would like to work and the physical activities that you would like to do. You could also describe your preferences in terms of working with Data-People-Things.

The second category could include those things that describe what you are **able** to do. Here you could describe your aptitudes, the physical environment in which you could work if you had to, the physical activities you are capable of performing, and your present education and training levels. You could also describe the extent to which you could be involved with Data-People-Things, and the kind of situations to which you could adapt easily because of your temperamental qualities.

The third category could include those things that describe what you are **willing** to do. For example, here you might include the level of education and training you are willing to attain. You might also describe the physical environment in which you would be willing to work, and the physical activities you would be willing to do.

As you classify your self-information in this manner, you may discover some discrepancies. What you want to do and what you are able to do may be quite different. What you are able to do and what you are willing to do may be different. What you are willing to do and what you want to do may even be different. So you may have to do some re-thinking about the kinds of things that are important to you.

For example, suppose you have stated that you want to work with people in a situation where you would be counselling and advising them. But suppose you have also stated that you are unwilling to take any training beyond high school. How many occupational alternatives can you think of that would enable you to do counselling and advising with a high school education? Probably not too many.

In a case like this, you would have to modify your preferences unless, of course, you were willing to do more to get what you want.

Once you have classified your information and checked it in the manner described here, you should also check it against the results of your personal inventory. For example, are the interests you expressed when you did the COII similar to the ones you have shown in your past activities? Are the aptitude levels you obtained on the GATB reflected in your past performances? Do your actions in the past show that you are able to adjust to situations such as those involving stress?

It could be that both your analyses will show the same things about you. In that case, you have some assurance that the information you have put down is accurate. But suppose that they don't show the same things. What does this mean?

Depending on what you are examining, it could mean a number of different things. Take the matter of interests. If they are not the same, it could mean that you deliberately tried to slant your answers on the interest inventory. Or it could mean that your life's experiences have not been wide enough to enable you to accurately state what your interests really are. What would you do in these situations?

In the first instance, you could change your interest profile so that it presents a more accurate picture of what you are like. After all, it would make little sense to explore for occupational possibilities on the basis of something that is not descriptive of you. In the second instance, you may have to engage in a variety of study, work and leisure activities and assess your feelings toward them before you begin searching for occupational alternatives in earnest.

Or take the matter of aptitudes. If your scores are lower than past performance would indicate they should be, it could simply mean that you were nervous or tired when you took the test. Hence, you did not perform as well as you normally would. It could also mean that you are what is commonly called an "over-achiever". That is, you are a person who compensates for lower aptitudes by working extra hard.

On the other hand, if your scores are higher than past performance would indicate they should be, it could mean still different things. It could mean that you are very lazy. If this is the case and you don't intend to change, then you might be wise to look for work that won't require too much of you. But it could also mean that

you have never had a chance to prove what you are really capable of doing. If this is the case, you might want to look for occupational alternatives that are more challenging. After all, you're not the "dummy" you always thought you were!

Only you can determine the reasons for any differences between your personal inventory and the analysis described here. But you should attempt to resolve those differences. If you search for occupational possibilities using self-information that is not accurate, you are not likely to find satisfying work.

## **USING YOUR INFORMATION**

Assume that you have now checked your information and made any necessary changes in it. What is your next task going to be?

Your next task will be to search for occupational alternatives. And your goal should be to locate as many as you possibly can.

Now, if you carefully examine your self-information, you will notice that some of your self-descriptors have the effect of broadening the range of alternatives available to you. Others have the effect of narrowing them. For example, if you were to search for occupations on the basis of your interest in "working with things and objects", you could possibly locate hundreds of alternatives. But if you were to search for occupations that only require you to have a grade ten education, you might locate a handful of alternatives.

At this stage in your exploration, you should use those self-descriptors that will permit you to locate the greatest number of possibilities. And the reasons for doing so are quite simple. Experience has shown that many people choose occupations from too narrow a base, and rarely are they satisfied with the outcomes. But related to this is another more important reason. Many aspects of you that presently limit the range of options available to you could be changed if you found something that you wanted badly enough. As you already know, however, you cannot choose something if you do not know that it exists!

### **Matching Profiles**

Ways of locating occupational alternatives are presented in Chapter Eight. For example, you can read widely. You can talk to informed persons such as counsellors, employers and workers. You can attend Career Days in your school and look at films on career opportunities in different fields. There are numerous ways to conduct your search.

But the remainder of this chapter describes one specific method of locating occupational alternatives. This is by matching the self-profile you have developed from completing tests, inventories and checklists to the occupational qualifications profiles presented in the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**.

The CCDO presents occupational qualifications profiles in coded form. For example, the interest patterns of workers in a certain occupation will appear like this: Ints: 91. What does this mean? If you refer back to the section describing interests, you will see that "9" refers to "situations involved a preference for activities that are nonsocial in nature, and are carried on in relation to processes, machines and techniques". The digit "1" refers to "situations involving a preference for activities dealing with things and objects".

The first thing you must do, then, is put your self-information into a comparable coded form. Perhaps you will have a code something like this for your temperaments: Temps: YO. This means that you are able to adjust easily to "situations involving the precise attainment of set limits, tolerances or standards" and "situations involving the evaluation of information using measurable or verifiable standards".

Once you have coded all of your self-information, you are ready to look for occupational alternatives. And here you may use a number of "tools" or persons to assist you with the process. For example, if you have access to a computer that has its information stores on the CCDO classification system, you can use it. You can use occupational exploration kits or access tables based on the CCDO. You can even use the **Dictionary** itself if you have the patience to read through thousands of occupational profiles in search of the right ones!

But suppose the **Dictionary** is your only source of information. What will you do then? If you are wise, you will take your completed profile to a Canada Manpower Centre and ask for assistance in locating occupational alternatives. Canada Manpower counsellors must use the CCDO over and over again in their daily work. Therefore, they are quite familiar with the profiles in it and could easily help you find ones that would match your own.

Obviously, computers are the quickest way of locating information, occupational exploration kits the next quickest, and so on. But regardless of the system you use, the steps you follow should be the same.

First, you should generate alternatives using those personal descriptors that have the effect of broadening your options. Your interests are often the best ones to look at first. But for people with very high aptitudes, these could also serve to generate a broad range of alternatives.

Then, when you have a sufficiently broad base from which to eventually make a choice, you can begin the narrowing process. At this point, you might use descriptors related to what you are capable of doing and what you are willing to do. For example, perhaps you have produced a list of one hundred occupations in which you would have a chance to "work with things and objects". To narrow this range somewhat, you might use the descriptor that relates to the physical activities you can do. This might reduce your list to seventy-five. Then you put in another descriptor such as your level of education and this reduces the list still more. And so the process continues.

But a word of caution is required. **The Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations** describes the "average" worker. In actual fact, the members of any occupation will vary widely in their aptitudes, interests and personal character traits. Matching personal profiles with occupational qualifications profiles is just one way of roughly determining some occupations for which you might be suited. Moreover, the information on which you are doing your matching is not the only information you need in order to make a good occupational choice.

For example, what about the salary which was so important to you a little while ago? Are you now going to forget about it? Or what about your dream of having lots of time to spend on leisure activities? Will you forget about it as well? And what about matters like family responsibilities, finances, your personal motivation and the like? Can they be ignored? Indeed they can't be.

Before you can make a satisfying choice, you are going to have to re-examine the results of your personal inventory again and again. You are also going to have to carefully study those occupations that interest you most. This is the subject of the next chapter.

## SUMMARY

You are an unique individual. You have a pattern of interests, aptitudes and character traits that is a bit different from everyone

else's. Similarly, each occupation has a pattern of traits that it requires of those who work in it.

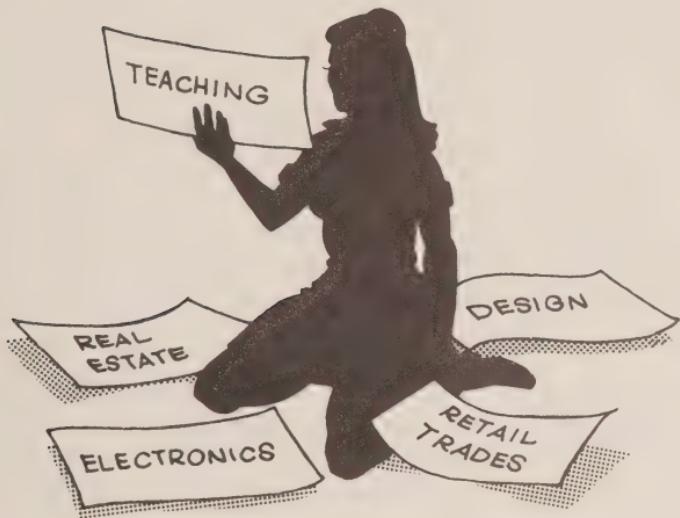
These worker traits or occupational qualification requirements are given in Volume 2 of the **CANADIAN Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**. For each group of occupations, this Dictionary shows the interest and aptitude patterns of its workers. It describes the level of education and training they must have. It describes what they must be able to do. It also describes physical activities involved in the work performed, the environmental conditions in which the work is done, and different situations to which workers must adapt.

By taking certain tests and inventories and by completing special checklists, you can develop a self-profile which can later be matched against occupational qualifications profiles. This "matching" can be done through using the computer, occupational exploration kits, access tables or the Dictionary itself.

In using any of these ways of locating occupational alternatives, the process is the same. You begin by using descriptions of yourself that will enable you to generate the broadest list of alternatives. Many people explore occupations by "interests" first. Once you have a substantial list of occupations to consider, you begin the narrowing process. At this stage, you use descriptions of yourself like the level of training you are willing to undertake or the kinds of physical activities you are able to do.

Matching personal profiles to occupational qualifications profiles is just one way of determining some occupations for which you might be suited. But it is difficult to make a good choice just on the basis of this information because it is incomplete. For example, it does not include information about such things as salary, degree of commitment required, and so on. These kinds of things can only be determined by studying occupations that interest you very carefully.

# CHAPTER SEVEN



## STUDYING OCCUPATIONS

By using the methods described in earlier chapters, you should be able to locate a broad range of occupational possibilities from which to eventually make a choice. Look them over briefly but not too critically. If there are some for which you are obviously unsuited, you may wish to drop them from your list. For example, perhaps you already know that some of the occupations you have located require completion of five or more years of university education before you can qualify for entry. If you also know that you are not prepared to spend that amount of time getting ready to work, you may wish to eliminate them from further consideration.

The remaining possibilities must then be studied carefully. Eventually, you are going to have to evaluate each one in terms of the success and satisfaction that it is likely to provide. But you can only do this if you have adequate, relevant information.

Now, it's in the area of collecting information that a lot of people fall down. Some think that they already have enough facts and, hence, they approach this task half-heartedly. Others apply themselves diligently to the task but collect information that isn't very useful. Still others collect information in such a haphazard fashion that they are unable to sort and weigh their various possibilities later.

To ensure that none of these things happen to you, it's a good idea to first develop an outline to use in collecting your information. A suggested format for this task is shown below. Explanations are also given to assist you in obtaining the required facts and in analyzing and evaluating them. Sources of occupational information are then discussed in the following chapter.

## **BASIC OUTLINE FOR STUDYING AN OCCUPATION**

### **Name of Occupation**

This should be the title that is most commonly used for the occupation you are studying.

### **Other Titles**

When an occupation has more than one name or title, you should include all of them. This will enable you to obtain as much information as possible and prevent you from overlooking any prospective employment opportunities.

### **Duties Performed**

You should make a thorough study of the typical duties and

responsibilities of persons working in the occupation, including the activities and various types of work they perform. This information can be useful in determining the extent to which your interests would be satisfied by the work you would be required to do. It can also be useful in determining your likelihood of success in the occupation.

## **Qualifications**

All occupations have certain requirements. These are known as the personal requirements of the field or the *job specifications*. They may vary considerably from employer to employer. They may also vary from province to province, particularly in cases where licences are required to practice or operate. However, a study of usual standards will enable you to assess your chances of obtaining employment or a licence should you decide to qualify for the field.

**Sex.** It is true that human rights legislation has been enacted to prevent discrimination. But you will be remiss in your study of occupations if you don't recognize reality. Some occupations, such as those in religious fields, are still restricted to either males or females. Often these restrictions are based on customs or traditional practices rather than the requirements of the work. In such cases, you may want to try to force your way into an occupation that has previously barred persons of your sex. Or you may choose to accept the barrier and spend your time and effort preparing for work in which sex is not a handicap or limitation.

**Age Limits.** It is important for you to obtain information about the legal as well as arbitrary age limits that are placed on certain occupations. Generally, these are minimum limits that are either set by law or by precedent, but there also may be maximum age limits. Examples of occupations with age restrictions are found in law enforcement and military fields. As well, some occupations within the entertainment field might have arbitrary maximum limits. In such instances, you could find that your preparation time would take you beyond the maximum age set for people entering the field, and this could create a difficult barrier for you to overcome.

**Physical Requirements.** Some occupations have physical requirements that are not usually considered a part of the work. The most common of these are good health and no disabling handicaps. In some occupations, the physical requirements may be established to meet certain medical standards established by the company. These may be protective from the point of view of other employees or of the insurance company underwriting workmen's compen-

sation. In other occupations, the physical requirements are directly related to the work done. For example, it would be pointless for you to consider being a salesclerk if you are unable to stand on your feet all day long. Or you could not become an airline pilot if you are colour-blind. In still other occupations, the physical requirements of work are peculiar to the circumstances of the individual company or situation. For example, a doctor may not have to meet special requirements in order to practice. But if s/he wanted to practice medicine in a remote desert or mountain area, s/he may be required to be physically able to withstand the conditions under which s/he would be working.

Experience has shown that many persons have overcome physical handicaps to become a success in their chosen occupational field. However, the risks are great when the requirements are realistic for the work involved. In such instances, you might be wiser to prepare for an occupation for which you are not handicapped.

*Physical Activities.* As well as obtaining information about the physical requirements of an occupation, you should also consider the physical activities that are involved in the work. You need to know what kinds of activities will be present, their duration, and the extent to which you would be involved. You might also find it advisable to learn the significance of each of these activities and their relative importance to successful performance.

In addition to considering your physical capacity to perform the activities you identify, you should think about whether or not you would enjoy performing them. You might also consider whether or not these are activities that you could easily do as you grow older. For example, travelling salespersons might find it easy to carry their samples throughout their territory in the early days of their selling careers. But as they grow older, the samples may seem heavier to lug around and travelling from customer to customer may become boring and wearying. For these people, the physical activities of their occupation may become more and more disagreeable as time passes.

*Mental Requirements.* The mental requirements of most occupations are as important as any of the qualifications, and you must be careful to seek out good information about them. Then match your aptitudes with those required for success in the occupation. Should you find that it requires greater mental talents than you possess, you might want to consider other occupational possibilities. At the same time, remember that possession of the required mental abilities is no guarantee of

success. Many persons of ability do not have the ambition, the perseverance, or the social qualities to use their capacities to the utmost.

*Social Requirements.* In some occupations, the social contacts you have or develop may be essential to your ultimate success. Included as part of the social requirements of these occupations are such things as your ability to entertain clients socially, to make the right kind of friends, and to obtain membership in certain prestigious clubs and organizations.

In considering your capacity to meet requirements of this kind, you should also give some thought to your desire to do so. Many people may have the ability but not the inclination to carry on the social life that would be required of them.

Closely associated with the social requirements of an occupation is the type of life you may have to lead as a part of it. For example, those who follow careers in the field of entertainment often find it difficult to obtain privacy in their lives away from work. They are constantly subject to the prying eyes of the press and their audiences. Travelling salespersons and airline crews may get to see different parts of the country. However, they may be away from their families much of the time. A forester may enjoy working outdoors. But s/he may have to go for hours without talking to another person. Whatever the requirements, you should know what they are in order to match them to your own interests and desires.

*Moral Requirements.* Today there are many definitions of and ideas about moral standards. In most instances, however, questions of morality revolve around your relations with the opposite sex, use of alcohol and drugs, gambling, stealing, cheating, lying, and political involvements.

As with social requirements, certain occupations will bring you into the public eye and require you to maintain high moral standards. In other types of work, you will be required to be bonded. Few companies or organizations will bond those who do not meet their moral standards, no matter how artificial they may be. Similarly, few will continue to employ you once they discover any violations of their standards. In occupations having moral requirements, it is not unusual for a prospective employer to investigate your personal background more thoroughly than your abilities.

*Special Skills:* In your study of occupations, you should not overlook any special skills you must possess. Sometimes they may be a

basic part of the occupation itself. In such instances, you will normally find out about them when you are studying such things as duties and various mental, physical and social requirements.

But sometimes, certain skills may be additional to the regular requirements of an occupation. They may form extras that will make the difference between ordinary and outstanding performance. For example, a musician may have the ability to move the violin bow and to finger the strings. S/he may also have the ability to sense the harmony of sounds. But if s/he cannot relate to an audience, the chances of that person becoming an outstanding musician are very slim indeed!

*Special Tools.* For many occupations, you will need your own special tools and equipment in order to do the work. These may range from the tools of the craftsman to those of the professional. In analyzing an occupation, you should not only find out about the tools themselves, but also about the costs of obtaining them. For example, suppose that you want to become a dentist. You are going to have to provide yourself with the necessary equipment and tools with which to work. But in addition to that, you are going to have to pay for an extensive period of training before you can qualify as a dentist. Could you afford it?

### **Preparation Required**

Almost all types of work will require you to undertake some form of preparation. Sometimes, it may consist of the minimum necessary to provide the foundation for the training you will receive once you have been employed. At other times, it may be the complete training and education necessary for satisfactory performance. The amount and type of preparation required will vary with the type of work in which you are interested. It will include the various types of preparation discussed in a later chapter.

### **Licensing Requirements**

Many occupations are regulated by government legislation. Therefore, you may be required to obtain a licence or certificate before you can be employed. Not only does this apply to occupational fields like medicine and dentistry, but also to barbering, law, pharmacy, truck driving, teaching, plumbing and psychology.

In cases where there are licensing requirements to be met, you will want to find out what you must do to qualify for a licence and how you go about the process of making application. You should also obtain information about the fees involved.

## **Organizations or Associations in the Field**

While you are collecting facts about an occupation, you will probably contact the various organizations or associations in the field, such as professional organizations, trade associations and unions. These groups can provide you with much of the information needed for this study. They can also provide you with information on the ways in which you can become employed or begin to engage in the work. For example, in certain fields you may be required to belong to the organization or association in order to obtain employment. This is particularly true of professional societies in which membership is a pre-requisite to practicing in the profession. Similarly, in many of the trades, union membership offers preferential placement in jobs. And if the industry or business operates on a closed shop basis, such an affiliation may be required.

## **Working Conditions**

An important consideration in your study of any occupation should be the conditions under which you would work while doing a job. Often, the environmental surroundings of the work may influence your decision to enter the occupation. Among the more important factors to consider are the following:

1. *Work Location.* Is the work performed inside, outside, or in both settings? If the work is done out of doors, is there any provision for shelter in case of inclement weather?
2. *Heat and Cold.* Does the work involve contact with heat? If so, what kind of heat is involved and to what degree does the temperature rise? What protective measures are provided for any exposure to heat? The same questions that are raised about heat will also cover cold.
3. *Wetness or Humidity.* Is the atmosphere damp, wet or humid? If so, are employees required to wear waterproof clothing?
4. *Noise and/or Vibration.* Is the work performed in a noisy area or one in which there is contact with vibrations? What is the intensity of these noises or vibrations? Do they vary during the working day? What provisions are made to reduce or to eliminate them?
5. *Hazards.* Is the work performed under conditions in which the employee is exposed to the definite risk of bodily injury?
6. *Atmospheric Conditions.* Are there any fumes, odours, toxic

conditions, or dust created in connection with performance of the work? What provisions are made for protection and for exhausting them? How disagreeable is this exposure? What is the possibility of injurious effects?

### **Income**

Most people have certain financial objectives in mind when they are studying occupations. In order to be able to match your personal ones against the occupations you examine, you should obtain information on the starting salary, the average earnings of qualified individuals, and the maximum pay received.

You will also want to find out about any extras you might receive in the form of fringe benefits, over-time pay, or bonuses. Fringe benefits might include such things as hospitalization plans, life insurance, medical and dental plans, pensions, paid holidays and paid vacations, stock-purchase plans, and similar programs.

Rather than paying high salaries as such, some companies will allow you to work over-time in order to make additional money. Others accomplish the same results by providing bonuses, either in the form of profit-sharing or incentive wages for increasing your productivity or improving your performance. Each of these extras may add many dollars to the net worth of an occupation.

### **Working Time**

Most occupations involve year-round employment. However, there are some that are seasonal in nature. For example, many professional athletes work only during certain seasons in the year. People involved in primary industries such as fishing, farming and forestry may also be seasonally employed. There are other occupations in which the work consists of periodic assignments. For example, an engineering consultant may accept several short-term assignments rather than working continuously.

When you are studying an occupation, you should find out whether the work involved is continuous, seasonal or periodic. You should also find out the hours that are commonly worked. Is the job performed during the regular hours of a working day, or does it consist of shift work? The regularity of employment and working times can both have a considerable effect on your life outside of work.

### **Opportunities for Advancement**

Few people would want to enter an occupation without any

prospect of improving their position for the future. In studying an occupation, therefore, you will want to find out as much as you can about advancement opportunities. These opportunities may be in terms of growth within the occupational field, growth within the company but outside the occupation in which you started, and growth or increases in income. Of course, much will depend on your own performance, but the experience of others generally should provide the necessary data for your consideration.

At the same time, you should study the difficulties that may be encountered in obtaining advancements. For example, are promotions usually based on training and merit, or upon the whim of an employer? Are you entering a field in which your qualifications make you a good candidate for promotions? Is there much competition for jobs?

It may also be helpful for you to gather information about specific jobs that provide opportunities for advancement. You should include those jobs related to the basic occupation for which your training and experience will qualify you. You should also include those jobs for which you may have to undertake additional training in order to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves.

Finally, you should consider the growth possibilities of the occupation or occupational field. Major changes have taken place in the labour market during recent years, and the future potential of a number of occupations has been affected. You should closely appraise all the data about changes that could affect the future growth possibilities of the occupation you are studying. You must also keep abreast of new trends in this field and in those related to it.

## SUMMARY

Once you have located a broad range of occupational possibilities, you are ready to begin the process of elimination that will eventually result in your making a choice. During the first stage, only those occupations which are least likely to result in satisfying outcomes should be eliminated. Then, you must study the remaining ones carefully.

This chapter presents a basic outline for studying occupations. You will want to find out about the nature of the work done and the requirements for entry into the occupation you are examining. You will want to obtain information on the working conditions, the

amount of income you can anticipate, and the opportunities for advancement. You will also want to assess employment trends. This information will help you to evaluate each occupational possibility in terms of the success and satisfaction that it is likely to provide.

# **CHAPTER EIGHT**



**LOCATING  
OCCUPATIONAL  
INFORMATION**

There are many sources of occupational information and each may be valuable in a special way. Depending on the occupational field you are studying and the questions you want answered, some sources will provide you with more complete information than others. Some sources will definitely be better for you than others.

In this chapter, the more common sources of occupational information are described and, where necessary, suggestions are given about how to use them properly. Only you can decide which ones are best for your purposes. But one thing is certain. If you rely solely on the ideas about occupations that are prevalent among your classmates and friends, you may get a very distorted picture of the field you are studying.

For example, many people think that lawyers have great prestige, wealth, and access to political power. They are pictured in the middle of a courtroom cross-examining witnesses, arguing, and delivering eloquent speeches after the style of Perry Mason. Such concepts are simply unrealistic.

How many of the best known persons in our country are lawyers? Of the ten wealthiest persons in Canada, how many are lawyers? How many lawyers are members of our city councils, provincial legislatures, or federal parliament? A survey would indicate that only a small percentage actually have these qualities. Beyond this, the stereotype of lawyers standing in courtrooms entering final pleas leaves out many other aspects of their work — drawing up mortgages, wills, deeds and other legal papers, researching and working on briefs, counsellelling individuals concerning their rights and obligations, and so on. As well, many lawyers never see the inside of a courtroom unless they get a speeding ticket.

## PUBLISHED MATERIALS

There are many types of published materials devoted to occupational information and you should become familiar with them. Some of the different ones you might consult are described below.

**Occupational monographs** provide detailed information about one specific occupation. Usually, they describe such things as the nature of the work done, qualifications and preparation requirements, methods of entry, advancement possibilities, earnings, working conditions, and sources of additional information. **Occupational briefs** are similar to monographs but are shorter in length. **Occupational abstracts** provide a concise summary of a job in an occupational area, giving the duties, nature of employment, etc. in general terms. In **occupational guides**, you will find brief facts

about various phases of an occupation. However, they do not describe any particular jobs. A **job series** provides broad coverage of an entire occupational area and gives brief accounts of all job opportunities in the field.

**Career fiction** generally describes the experiences of imaginary characters in different occupations. Often it includes information on how they entered the occupations and progressed up the occupational ladder. **Biographies** are usually accounts of persons who have been successful in certain fields. Like career fiction, biographies may be more interesting to read than monographs, briefs, and so on, but sometimes the information is less accurate.

There are also a wide variety of booklets, pamphlets, brochures, charts and posters related to occupations. **Business and industrial descriptive literature** describes a particular business or industry. It may also show the scope and pattern of occupational opportunities within that business or industry. **Occupational or industrial descriptions** describe the principal opportunities of an occupation in **one** industry or **one** occupation in several industries. They may include a brief account of the industry or industries themselves. **Recruitment literature** provides a brief coverage of the facts about a particular occupation. As the name suggests, its purpose is to recruit persons into the field. Posters or charts present occupational information through pictures, graphs and tables.

Many helpful articles are published in **periodicals** on occupations, **popular magazines**, and **newspapers**. To locate information in these sources, you usually must use a library's periodical and newspaper indexes. They classify recently published information and articles by subject, sometimes under different subject headings. Some of the index headings you might check in order to find recent information include the following:

1. The specific name of the occupation in which you are interested
2. Employment
3. Employment Opportunities
4. Job Analysis
5. Job Descriptions
6. Labour, Canada — students and graduates
7. Manpower
8. Maturity — vocational

9. Occupations, choice of
10. Placement
11. Professions — name of various professions
12. Vocational Guidance
13. Youth — employment

Among the indexes you will find most helpful in your search for reliable information are the following:

**Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature** summarizes references to articles published in popular magazines.

**Social Sciences and Humanities Index** is a guide to periodical literature in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

**Business Periodicals Index** is a cumulative subject index to periodicals in the fields of accounting, advertising, banking and finance, insurance, labour and management, marketing and purchasing, public administration and specific business.

**Education Index** is a cumulative subject index to educational periodicals.

**Canadian Periodical Index** is a cumulative subject index to selected Canadian magazines.

Similar indexes are found in specialized libraries for most of the occupational fields — for example, **Index to Law Periodicals**, **Engineering Index** and **Index Medicus**.

Most government publications fall into one of the categories described about. For example, departments at both the federal and provincial levels produce monographs, career briefs, bibliographies, pamphlets, booklets and brochures. But in addition, they do **community surveys**, **economic reports**, and **job analyses**. These are very accurate, highly statistical, comprehensive reports made as a result of local, national or industrial studies. The **Census of Canada** is the best known example of these types of publications.

One specialized government document that you probably will want to consult is the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**, Volumes 1 and 2. It is the most comprehensive publication on occupational activity in the Canadian world of work. Volume 1 contains the descriptions of approximately 6,700 occupations arranged into 23 major groups, 81 minor groups and

498 unit groups. The descriptions include information on the activities performed by workers, the qualifications required, the time needed for training, the physical activities involved in the work, and the environmental conditions in which the work is done. Volume 2, which has been described in an earlier chapter, contains occupational qualifications profiles for different groups of occupations.

To make best use of the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations**, you need to understand a number of things. You need to understand the function and purposes of the various parts of the dictionary and how they relate to one another. You also need to know how the occupational classification system used relates to the real world of work.

This information is contained at the beginning of Volume 1. As well, at the beginnings of both Volumes 1 and 2, you will find explanations of the terms and abbreviations used. Be sure to read these introductory pages before you begin your search for information. And if you are still confused, ask someone to help you. Your best sources of assistance will be school counsellors and Canada Manpower counsellors who use the CCDO extensively in their work.

All of the occupational information described so far has been in either bound or unbound written form. Today, however, a variety of this material is available in other media. For example, there are many excellent **films**, **filmstrips**, **slide presentations**, **audiotapes** and **videotapes**. These, too, can be good sources of data when you are studying occupations.

### **Locating Published Materials**

The materials described in the previous section can be found in a number of places. The most obvious location is in a library — either a public library or one attached to an educational institution, organization or government agency.

Sometimes schools, colleges and universities keep all of their occupational information in a special place. For example, they may locate audiovisual and written materials in a career information centre, placement office or counselling office. As well, they may store the materials on microfilm, microfiche, or computer tapes. In this case, you must use special equipment such as a reader or computer terminal in order to obtain your information. If you are not a student, you can often make arrangements to use the facilities described here by simply telephoning the person in charge of them.

Another good resource is the Canada Manpower Centre in your community. Even if you live in a small area, this Centre will usually have a large collection of occupational materials available. It certainly will have a copy of the **Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations** which is not found in all libraries.

Today, many radio and television programs are slanted toward vocations and sometimes you can obtain these recordings from your local station. Audiovisual and written materials are also available from local employers, unions, professional, trade and business associations, and government agencies other than Canada Manpower. Newspaper offices are yet another source of occupational information, and often you can locate good materials in bookstores.

### Evaluating Published Materials

The importance of obtaining up-to-date, reliable information cannot be stressed enough. The world of work is changing very rapidly and it is often difficult for libraries and other resource centres to keep information current. Facts today may not be so tomorrow. Wages, training requirements, licensing requirements, and the employment outlook are all subject to change. Many of these changes could make a difference to you when you are faced with an occupational decision.

The following suggestions may help you in determining the value of any written or audiovisual materials you obtain:

1. Check the date of publication of all materials you locate. If they were published more than three years ago, chances are the information will not be accurate.
2. Check the place of publication. A lot of occupational materials are prepared in the United States. While their descriptions of what the work is like may be accurate, things like training requirements, licensing, and advancement possibilities may be different. Remember, too, that there can be provincial differences in certain requirements. What is applicable in the province of British Columbia may not be so in Nova Scotia.
3. Try to determine the purposes for which the materials were prepared. As you have seen, occupational information is available from many sources. Some of these materials will be completely accurate. Others may have been designed to recruit persons into the field. Usually, such publications are biased and must be carefully evaluated.

4. Occupational materials are always prepared in terms of how the authors view the occupations they are writing about. Often their perceptions will be accurate. But to be certain that you are getting reliable information, you should consult more than one source.
5. Avoid materials that present only the advantages of an occupation. Good occupational information will present both sides of the story.
6. Statements suggesting that "opportunities are good" may be mere opinion. Reliable materials will present supporting evidence.

## **ORGANIZATIONS, AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

The materials described in the last sections can give you a good overview of an occupation. Sometimes, however, you may want information that is not provided in these publications. In this case, you can write to a number of sources for answers to specific questions that you have. Here are some of these sources of information:

1. Public Service Commission, Government of Canada
2. Regional Offices, Department of Manpower and Immigration.  
These include: Atlantic Regional Office, Halifax  
Quebec Regional Office, Montreal  
Ontario Regional Office, Toronto  
Prairie Regional Office, Winnipeg  
Pacific Regional Office, Vancouver
3. Civil Service Commission of your province
4. Apprenticeship Branch, Department of Labour in your province
5. Women's Bureau, Department of Labour in your province
6. Department of Education in your province
7. University and College Placement Offices
8. Instructional departments of institutions offering educational programs related to the occupation in which you are interested
9. Professional, trade or business associations
10. Labour unions
11. Public and private employment agencies

## 12. Companies

To locate their names and addresses, you should again use your library. Here, in the reference section, you can find directories, catalogues and handbooks containing the information you need. If you are unable to find what you are looking for, ask one of the reference librarians to assist you. Often they have books listing names and addresses that are not displayed on the library's shelves.

As in all forms of communication, there is a right way and a wrong way to ask for information. To help you in writing your letters, the following suggestions are given:

1. State your request in the first paragraph of your letter. This will enable the first person reading it to refer your request to the correct department or person without the loss of time or effort.
2. Give as much information about your needs as you can. For example, suppose you want to borrow a film from Shell Oil. Do you know the title? Will you accept a substitute? If you do not know the name of the film, in what subject are you interested? Oil? In what phase of the oil industry are you interested — exploration, processing or sales? Failure to supply any part of this information will necessitate more correspondence, with attendant delays.
3. Be courteous. You are asking a favour so do so politely. This will create a good impression and will make the person receiving your letter more willing to help you.

## INFORMED PERSONS

Most people are willing to discuss their work with you or to help you obtain the information you need to make a wise occupational choice. You might talk with any of the following persons:

1. Employers and personnel managers
2. Workers in the occupation
3. School, college, university, Canada Manpower or vocational counsellors. These persons usually have a library of information pertaining to jobs, occupations and careers. They are able to supply not only general data, but also specific information about the existence of certain occupations in your own geographic area. Counsellors also frequently administer tests to

aid in determining your aptitudes and interests for particular occupations.

4. Teachers, especially vocational teachers, often have occupational information. They can use their varied experiences and backgrounds to furnish you with realistic and accurate facts. If they do not have the information you need, they usually know where and how to obtain it.
5. Recruiting representatives visiting your school, college or university.
6. Speakers at Career Day sessions.
7. Persons in charge of exhibits at business, trade and commercial shows.
8. Persons conducting visitors' tours of business and industrial establishments.

Before you talk to any of these persons, you should do a little reading about the occupation in which you are interested and prepare a list of specific questions you want answered. Then listen carefully. Just as you have to assess the accuracy of printed materials, so you must also separate hard facts from personal biases when you are obtaining information from experienced persons.

## OBSERVATION

Some of the people suggested as resources in the last section may be able to make arrangements for you to tour the facilities in which they work. This can be a valuable experience in helping you determine whether you would like a particular occupation. It gives you a chance to see, hear, feel and smell the environment in which you could be working. It also gives you a chance to question other people in the occupational field in which you are interested.

In touring a business or industrial facility, you should concentrate on the functions that workers are performing rather than the process. For example, suppose you are being shown around a printing and publishing establishment. Naturally, it is interesting to know everything that goes on from the moment the draft copy of a book arrives at the printer's desk until it is ready for marketing. But will this help you decide whether you would like the work? Probably not. It will be much more useful if you carefully observe what the bookbinder, letter engraver, copy editor, typographer and others are doing.

As you observe the activities of different workers, try to determine what skills are involved in the work they do. Also attend to the physical and social environment. For example, are certain health or safety hazards evident? Do the workers seem to be enjoying their jobs? What kind of supervision are they receiving? Are they working by themselves or with other persons?

## **DIRECT EXPERIENCE**

One of the best ways to get information about an occupation is by actually trying out the work. There are a number of ways this can be done.

If you are extremely fortunate, you may be able to find a part-time job in your field of interest. But often, because of training requirements for entry, this is impossible. In such instances, you might try working in a related job that requires less skill and responsibility but still permits you to observe to some extent the occupation in which you are interested. For example, if you are considering becoming a doctor, you might work as an orderly during summer vacations. Today, many schools are arranging these work-experience programs with different employers as part of the guidance curriculum.

Another way to get information is to role-play actual experiences in different types of work. In this process, you play-act situations similar to those you would be experiencing on the job. Thus, you learn by doing but do not have to suffer because of mistakes you make while learning. In some schools and colleges, this process is being used in "case studies" or "workshop" courses.

You can also gain experience for certain occupations by doing laboratory work as part of your educational program. This is frequently done in such fields as engineering, forestry, nursing, mechanics and so on. A similar experience can be gained by doing exercises in the work experience kits that have been developed for many occupations. Perhaps your school has some of these kits available.

## **SUMMARY**

There are many sources of information on occupations. Educational publishers are constantly producing books, monographs, and other materials devoted to occupational information. Government agencies regularly prepare articles and reports on recent research

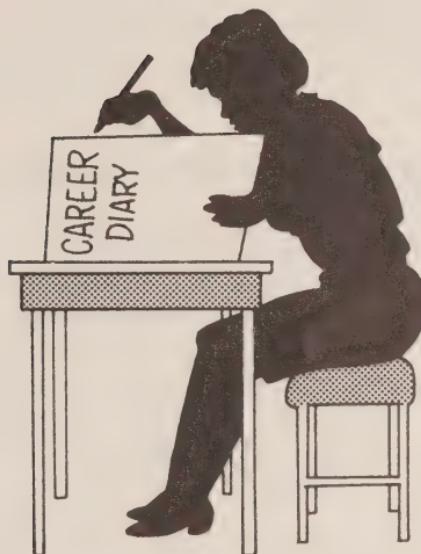
projects in job analysis. Up-to-date information about occupations can also be obtained from current magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets produced by professional, trade and business associations, labour unions and companies. These materials can be located in a number of places such as a library, career information centre, counselling or placement office, and the Canada Manpower Centre.

There are a number of organizations, agencies and institutions to whom you can write for information. There are also a number of persons to whom you can talk when you are looking for facts about an occupation in which you are interested.

One of the best ways of gauging your suitability for an occupation is through work experience. This experience can be gained through part-time employment in the occupation or in a related field, role-playing work situations, doing laboratory work as part of your educational program, and using work experience kits in your area of occupational interest. Only you can decide on the method of obtaining information that is most suitable for your purposes.



# CHAPTER NINE



**REVIEWING YOUR  
PLANS AND PROGRESS**

Chapter Seven presented an outline to use in studying occupations that interest you. And Chapter Eight described different ways of locating your information. If you followed the suggestions given, you should have been able to obtain adequate, relevant facts about each of your alternatives. Thus, you should now be ready to reduce your range of possibilities still further. You may even be ready to make a single choice.

This chapter describes how to analyze the information you have collected on each of your occupational alternatives. It also looks at the present state of your career plans. How far have you come? How close are you to making an occupational choice? Must you make other decisions before you can finally choose an occupation? Must you collect more information? These are some of the questions you must try to answer for yourself as you read the chapter.

## **ANALYZING YOUR OCCUPATIONAL ALTERNATIVES**

Essentially, the information you have gathered on each occupation falls into two categories. The first category includes information that will help you determine the satisfactions you might expect to obtain from an occupation. The second category includes information that will help you determine your likelihood of success in the occupation. Before you proceed with your analysis, then, you might wish to sort your information on each occupation into these two groups.

What kind of information will help you determine probable satisfactions? Here you might want to look at the facts you have collected on what the work is like. For example, what kinds of tasks would you be doing regularly? Are they varied or almost the same every day? What opportunities are there to be creative, or to do projects on your own? How much responsibility do you have? What kind of supervision can you expect? Are there pressures as a result of deadlines that must be met, or is the work pace fairly moderate?

You probably will want to look at the relationships you will have with other people. For example, will you be working by yourself most of the time, or will you be a member of a team? Will you have contact with only your co-workers, or will you meet other people? What kinds of people will you work with?

If the physical environment in which you would work is important to you, information about it should be included here. For example, is the work done indoors or outside? Are the surroundings

attractive or unattractive? Are there any hazardous conditions which you must tolerate? Here you might also include information on the geographic area in which the work is usually done. For example, what is it like to live in these areas? Would you have access to things that are important to you such as shops, theatres and recreation areas?

Many people obtain satisfactions from the security that a job provides. Therefore, you might want to include facts that you have collected regarding employment trends and the future outlook of an occupation. For example, what is the present demand for workers? Have numbers been increasing in recent years? Is there likely to be much competition for jobs by the time you are ready to begin working? Have changes recently taken place within the occupation? What future changes are likely to take place? How would these changes affect you?

Under possible satisfactions, you will want to examine your information on opportunities for personal growth and advancement. For example, are there training programs which can be taken after you have entered the occupation? Is experience on the job likely to increase your competence? Along what lines may advancement occur? Are there related occupations to which you could move if you so desired?

You probably will want to consider the level of income you might expect to receive. You also could include information about possible benefits such as bonuses, pensions, medical plans, stock purchase options and the like.

Finally, you will want to examine any information you have obtained about the effects of the occupation on the lifestyle of its workers. For example, are workers generally satisfied with the status and respect they hold in the eyes of the community? Does their work help or hinder them in leading fulfilling lives off the job?

What kind of information will help you determine your likelihood of success in the occupation? Here you will again want to examine any facts you have collected on what the work is like. But this time you will want to consider the work in terms of your ability to do it. For example, are the tasks you would have to perform simple or complex? Do they require any special aptitudes, such as the ability to manipulate certain objects quickly? Are you able to cope with special situations that might arise in doing the work, such as meeting deadlines or being very accurate?

You certainly will want to carefully examine your qualifications for

entry into the occupation. Here you may include information you have collected on age limits, physical, mental, moral and social requirements, licensing requirements, compulsory union membership, citizenship requirements and the like.

Finally, you will want to consider your information on the type of preparation required. For example, how much general education is required? Is any vocational or professional training required? Do jobs to which you may advance require preparation beyond that needed for entry?

Once you have sorted your information into these two categories, you should be ready to analyze each of your occupational alternatives. There are two ways in which this can be done.

One way is to consider each piece of information you have gathered on an occupation separately. If it is information that you have categorized under "probable satisfactions", you will want to evaluate how well it is likely to meet your expectations. If it is information that you have categorized under "likelihood of success", you will want to evaluate it in terms of what you are capable of doing.

A second way is to work from the results of your personal inventory and any tests, inventories or checklists you have completed. This time you consider each piece of self-information separately and evaluate the occupation on how well it fits each aspect of you.

Both of these methods of analyzing occupational alternatives allow you to assign ratings on "probable satisfactions" and "likelihood of success". Thus, you can obtain two scores for each occupation you examine. You can also vary the weightings you give to "probable satisfactions" and "likelihood of success". For example, if you are a person who will take a lot of risks to get what you want, you can place greater importance on your "probable satisfactions" ratings. On the other hand, if you don't like to take risks, you can place more emphasis on your "likelihood of success" ratings.

When you have rated each occupational alternative, consider whether there are some occupations that you can eliminate. For example, are there some occupations that are not likely to give you what you want from work? Or are there some occupations in which there is a strong possibility that you wouldn't succeed?

If one of your occupational alternatives is clearly better than the others, you should be able to arrive at a single choice without too much difficulty. But suppose that one alternative is good in some ways and another alternative is good in other ways. Or suppose

that a number of alternatives seem equally attractive or equally unattractive. What will you do then?

If none of your alternatives appear to be attractive, you will surely consider other courses of action before you finally decide. In other words, you will search for other occupational alternatives on which to eventually base a decision.

In cases where you have conflicts as a result of the attractiveness of several alternatives, there are a number of things that you can do. For example, you can look at the satisfactions you expect to receive from working and rank them in order of their importance to you. Once you have done this, you may be able to arrive at a single choice. You can also examine your likelihood of success in each occupation and rank the various possible outcomes on the basis of their desirability to you. Once you have done this, you may be able to choose.

You might even delay your final choice for awhile. For example, it might be worthwhile delaying your choice until you have thoroughly explored job prospects. Once you know what is available to you in different occupations, it may be easier for you to decide. You might delay your final choice until you have explored education and training programs, and perhaps even made some decisions about them. Once you have done this, certain occupations may appear as greater possibilities than others.

Finally, you may delay your choice until you are able to determine how successful you have been in bringing about planned changes in your present ways of behaving. As an illustration, suppose you have narrowed your range of alternatives to something in the health sciences field. You want to become either a registered nurse or a certified nursing assistant. But in order to qualify for registered nurses' training, you know that you have to improve your grades. You might attempt to do this before you finally decide which alternative is more suitable for you.

## **ASSESSING YOUR PROGRESS**

The last section described the final steps involved in choosing an occupation. Now is the time to examine what you have done.

Have you looked at yourself closely? Do you know what you want from work and in your life outside of work? Do you know what you are capable of doing? Do you know what you must do in order to realize your goals?

Have you been searching for occupational alternatives? Have you assessed each alternative carefully in terms of the satisfaction and success it is likely to give you? Have you taken steps to reduce the number of alternatives available to you? Have you made some tentative choices?

If you have come this far, you must undoubtedly feel a sense of achievement. You may even be tempted to sit back and relax for awhile. But as you must realize, your work has only just begun.

First of all, let's assume that you have made a choice. What is your next step going to be? Depending on what you have chosen, there are a number of things you must do in order to implement your decision.

Perhaps you will have to begin searching for a job. As the companion book, **A Job Search Guide** shows, this involves many tasks similar to the ones you have just completed. It also involves some different tasks. For example, you have to review the results of your personal inventory. You have to locate job openings. You have to match your qualifications with the requirements of your job prospects. You have to make application. You also have to prepare for interviews.

Or perhaps you will have to begin exploring ways of preparing yourself to enter your chosen occupation. For example, will you prepare yourself by attending university, a community college, a technical institute or vocational school? Or will you prepare yourself through a combined work-study program such as an apprenticeship or on-the-job training? At this point, do you even know the options that might be available to you? Or do you know what educational and training opportunities are available? This is the subject of the next chapter.

Now, let's assume that you have not yet reached a firm decision. What do you still have to do? Probably you still have to collect information of some kind. For example, if the occupational alternatives you have presently located do not seem satisfactory, you will have to search for others. You may need to locate information on employment opportunities in certain occupations. Or perhaps you need to explore educational and training opportunities before you can decide.

## **ADJUSTING YOUR PLAN**

By the time you have completed the tasks described here and in the next chapter, you should have a good career plan for yourself.

But this is not a plan that will serve you for life. Rather, it is one to merely get you started. At each new stage in life, you are going to be faced with decisions that will be just as complex as the ones you have just made or are presently making. And just as you had to prepare yourself to make occupational and educational decisions, so you will have to prepare yourself to make these other decisions. You will have to assess yourself. You will have to explore your alternatives. And you will have to use a good strategy for deciding. In this way, you will have a greater chance of keeping some options open as you progress through life.

## SUMMARY

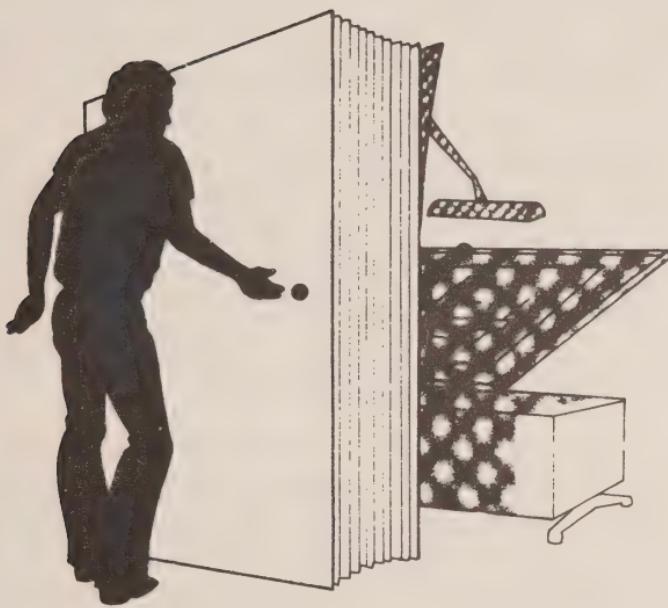
Once you have gathered information on each of your occupational alternatives, you should sort it into two groups. In the first group, you should put information that will help you determine the satisfaction you might expect to obtain from each occupation. In the second group, you should put information that will help you determine your likelihood of success. Then, you can begin to evaluate each of your alternatives.

There are two ways to evaluate your alternatives. One way is to consider each piece of information you have gathered on an occupation separately. Is the occupation likely to meet your expectations from work? Are you likely to be successful in it? The other way is to work from the results of your personal inventory and any tests, inventories or checklists you have completed. Does the occupation fit each aspect of you?

Both of these methods allow you to give ratings on "probable satisfactions" and "likelihood of success" to each of your alternatives. If one occupation comes out much higher than the others, you should have little trouble in deciding. But if you have conflicts, you may have to either rank the things that are of importance to you or rank possible outcomes on the basis of their desirability to you. You may also choose to delay your decision for awhile. For example, you may delay it until you have gathered information on job prospects or education and training opportunities.



# **CHAPTER TEN**



**WAYS OF  
ENTERING OCCUPATIONS**

Earlier chapters have stated that almost every occupation requires training of some sort before a worker is qualified to do the work. Sometimes there is only one way to get that training, such as by taking a specific program at a vocational school. At other times, there may be a number of options from which to choose.

For example, suppose that you have decided to become a registered nurse. You could take your training at a university if you wanted to get a degree as well. You could take it through a community college or an institute of technology. You could also take it through a school of nursing that is affiliated with a hospital.

But your choices don't just end there. Within each of these options, there are many alternatives. For example, there are many universities offering nursing programs. There are many community colleges and institutes of technology offering programs. Similarly, there are many schools of nursing from which to choose.

This chapter describes the major ways in which people obtain the education and training they need for their work, and directs you to sources of information on available opportunities. It also discusses some of the things you should consider when you are making decisions about education and training.

## **TYPES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

It would require several books to completely describe the different kinds of education and training people take to prepare themselves for work. For example, some people prepare themselves by taking certain programs at university. Some prepare themselves by taking certain programs at community colleges and technical institutes. Others prepare themselves by enrolling in programs at vocational schools or private trade schools. Still others take some form of work-study program such as an apprenticeship or on-the-job training.

This section describes some general features of each of these ways of preparing for work. As you read about them, assess your own position. What options are available to you for entering your chosen occupation? And if you have a choice, which one is the best for you?

### **University Programs**

Universities are talked about a lot today, so you probably already know something about them. Usually they have three types of programs leading to either diplomas or degrees. These include

programs in liberal arts, science and professional studies.

Liberal arts programs include subjects such as anthropology, economics, English, geography, history, mathematics, modern languages, philosophy, psychology, political science, sociology, creative writing, religion, theatre, and the like. Any one of these subjects, together with certain required and elective ones, can form a program of studies. Another alternative is to take a program of studies. Another alternative is to take a program of interdisciplinary studies such as Canadian studies, women's studies, Indian cultural studies and the like. Sometimes people enroll in a general arts program which usually takes three years to complete. Sometimes they enroll in an honours program which takes at least four years. An honours program enables them to specialize in one subject area and get enough background knowledge to take higher degrees.

Many universities offer degrees in both pure and applied sciences. Pure sciences include subjects like botany, chemistry, physics, anatomy, physiology, astronomy, zoology and the like. In some institutions, the pure sciences are broken down into two groups: the life sciences, which are concerned with understanding humans, plants and animals; and the physical sciences, which are concerned with understanding inanimate objects and forces. Like in liberal arts, there are both general and honours programs in the pure sciences.

Applied sciences are like the pure sciences in many ways. They may even include some of the same subjects. But here they attempt to apply knowledge. Examples of the applied sciences are fields like agriculture, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, architecture, engineering, forestry and oceanography.

Programs of professional studies may include many of those listed under the applied sciences. They also include a number of others such as social work, education, theology, library science, law, business administration and the like. Some programs of professional studies require an undergraduate degree in arts or science before you can enter them.

Perhaps attending university is one of your options — or even your sole option — for entering your chosen occupation. Or maybe you just want to take a few years of post-secondary education before you finally decide on what you want to do. In either case, there are some facts that you should know about university programs and how they relate to entering occupations. Here they are.

Some people think that the purpose of university programs is to prepare them for entry into specific occupations. With the exception of programs of professional studies, this is not so. The main purpose of university programs is to educate scholars and to prepare students for graduate studies. If you are a very practical-minded person, you could be very disappointed in your program of studies unless you are able to see how it relates to your future goals.

2. Unlike the people described above, some people think that university programs have no vocational value. They, too, are wrong. For one thing, a university education is the only form of preparation available for some occupations such as those of researcher, testing specialist and university department head. For another, a university education can help you develop many skills that are commonly used in jobs. For example, you might learn how to express yourself clearly in both speech and writing as a result of some of the courses you take. You might learn how to solve problems, analyze information, search for facts and so on.
3. Even when you graduate from a program of professional studies, you may have to do other things before you can enter your chosen occupation. For example, graduates of law school must pass bar examinations before they can practise as lawyers. Similarly, graduates of medical school must undertake an internship.
4. Some people think that their university education will enable them to start work in higher-level jobs than people who have not attended university. This is not always true. Many graduates have to start in low-level jobs. In time, however, they usually advance to worthwhile positions.

### **Community College and Technical Institute Programs**

Community colleges and technical institutes are fairly new educational institutions. They came into being as a result of a number of forces. The first was the public's expectation that post-secondary education should be available and financially possible for everyone. With higher admissions standards and increasing tuition costs, attending university was not an option for many people. In many cases, their only options were to choose occupations that required either trades training or some form of work-study program.

The second was the realization that many occupations have

preparation requirements that could not be fulfilled by existing institutions. On the one hand, they could not be fulfilled by the universities. On the other hand, they could not be fulfilled by vocational or trades schools. What was needed was an institution that could fill the existing gap.

The programs offered by community colleges vary widely. They include academic transfer programs that prepare people for advanced study at university. They include many technical and vocational programs. Here are just a few examples: marketing, business administration, nursing, early childhood education, social welfare, interior design, urban planning, theatre arts, journalism, data processing, food processing, dental assistant, laboratory technician, electronic technician, aviation, marine navigation, wildland management. They include remedial or up-grading programs that are designed to help people meet the requirements of college level courses. They include general education programs that are designed to enrich people's lives socially, emotionally and culturally. They also include community service programs of an educational, recreational or cultural nature. The programs may be of one, two or three years in duration.

Technical institutes are similar to community colleges in many ways. They offer training for occupations in which workers depend largely upon technical information and the laws of science, mathematics and technology to accomplish their tasks. And like the community colleges, they aim to train men and women for occupations that lie between skilled trades and scientific professions. Their programs are normally of one, two and three year's duration, but they usually require a high school diploma for entry.

Is attending a community college or technical institute one of the options available to you for entering your chosen occupation? If it is, here are some features of these institutions that you might like to consider:

1. Programs at community colleges and technical institutes are usually geared toward meeting local labour market needs. For example, in a place where there is a large forest industry, these institutions will provide training for that field.
2. Planning for most programs is done by an advisory committee composed of people in the field. This ensures that the program is providing the kind of training that will be acceptable to employers.
3. Employment prospects for graduates of community colleges and technical institutes are usually very good.

4. Many of the programs at community colleges and technical institutes provide credits which are transferrable to university study. Hence, you may advance in your chosen field of work if you so desire. For example, a chemical engineering technologist may become a professional chemical engineer through further study. At the same time, a word of caution is required. universities and professional associations differ in their acceptance of these programs. Some will give full credit for the work you have done; others will give partial credit; still others will give you no credit at all. Before you enroll in one of the programs, then, you should check on its advancement possibilities.

## Vocational or Private Trades School Programs

There was a time when the terms "vocational education" and "trades training" carried an image of inferior programs for inferior people. But this idea is now changing.

Today, people of widely varying abilities, ages and educational backgrounds are attending public vocational schools or privately run trade schools. Included in the student population are those who have left or graduated from high school without a marketable skill, unemployed or underemployed adults, workers whose skills or knowledge must be increased or updated, apprentices in skilled trades, supervisors who need leadership training, and those workers with physical and emotional handicaps.

If the emphasis of your training is to be on proficiency in one trade, a vocational or private trades school may be your best option. Some of the typical programs include automotive servicing, beauty culture, bookkeeping, bus and transport repair, business education, commercial art, commercial cooking, dining room service, diesel mechanics, electrical appliance repair, marine fishing, meat cutting, printing and binding, sheet metal, steamfitting-pipefitting, stenography, welding and the like. As well, many vocational schools offer upgrading programs to prepare you for entry into the vocational program of your choice. Programs range in duration from several weeks to a year.

If attending a vocational school or private trades school is one of the options available to you, here are some specific features of them that you may wish to consider:

1. The major purpose of vocational education or trades training is to enable people to enter and keep themselves in gainful employment. But this often means more than just obtaining the skills required for entry-level jobs. It includes mastery of skills that will

enable the individual to profit from on-the-job training and to grow and mature as a worker.

2. Planning for most vocational school programs is done by an advisory committee composed of employers and members of various government departments such as the Department of Labour and the Apprenticeship Branch. This ensures that the programs are providing the kind of training that is acceptable to employers. It also ensures that the programs offered are based on local employment needs. Therefore, job prospects are usually very good.
3. Private trade schools should be checked very thoroughly to make certain that they have accredited staff and are recognized agencies for training. Many provide excellent training but some do not. As well, some make job promises that they have no intention of fulfilling.
4. Tuition fees for vocational schools are usually very low in comparison to those of other educational institutions. In addition, financial assistance for many programs is available through the Canada Manpower Training Program. Fees for private trade schools vary widely. If they are a recognized school, however, you can sometimes obtain training allowances to attend them through CMTP.

## **Apprenticeship Programs**

The use of apprenticeships for passing on knowledge and skills to new workers dates back to the Middle Ages. At that time, various guilds developed the practice of indenturing young workers to master craftsmen. The period of indenture was often seven years and the worker who completed the program was accepted by the guild as a journeymen, or independent craftsman.

Today there are many opportunities similar to this. For example, large companies often organize apprenticeships to train new workers. In many trades, provincial governments plan and supervise programs at the request of industry. As well, the armed forces provide a similar system for developing job skills in a variety of occupations. Their apprenticeable trades also have application to civilian life in many cases.

Apprentices become highly skilled craftsmen, such as bakers, bricklayers, barbers, cement masons, electricians, plumbers, machinists, radio and TV service technicians, carpenters and the like. They do so in a formal training program that combines classroom instruction

and paid on-the-job experience under supervision. Depending on the trade, programs usually last from two to five years. At the end of this training period, you become a journeyman.

Is an apprenticeship program one of the options available to you for entering your chosen occupation? If it is, you might want to consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of this method of training:

1. Apprenticeship programs provide you with the opportunity to develop some highly prized skills and, eventually, recognition and prestige as a skilled craftsman. They also provide you with the opportunity to obtain further education and training with pay. As well, you have the assurance of good wages with regular increases.
2. On the other hand, some apprenticeship programs are very inflexible. The skills you learn cannot be applied to another occupation if you decide that you want to change. Some programs have unrealistic entry standards. They require levels of education far beyond what is actually required to learn the job skills. Some programs require a long time to complete them. During this training period, you must remain with the same employer. As well, the demand for apprentices is related to business cycles. When business is good, demand for apprentices is high. But in poorer times, employers are reluctant to hire apprentices.

### **On-The-Job Training**

Today many business, union, professional and industrial organizations conduct their own education and training programs. The main purpose of these programs is to train workers in the special skills required by the company in order to do their various jobs. These jobs may range from semi-skilled to managerial ones.

Like an apprenticeship, then, on-the-job training has the advantage of providing you with an opportunity to learn while working and being paid at the same time. But it also has some disadvantages. Sometimes the skills that are learned cannot be transferred to another job. And during periods when spending is being curbed, training programs are often the first expense to be cut from the budget. Thus, you could find yourself in a low-level position with little opportunity to learn the skills you need to advance. Is on-the-job training one of your options? Consider it carefully.

As stated at the beginning of this section, only the major ways of

preparing for entry into occupations have been considered here. There are hundreds of others. Today, more and more people are learning job skills through part-time study. For example, some are taking correspondence courses. Some are enrolled in university and college extension courses. Some are taking courses at night sponsored by local school boards. Some are taking weekend seminars sponsored by their professional associations. There are many forms of continuing education and one of them may be right for you if you wish to work and study part-time.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Earlier chapters stressed the importance of obtaining adequate, relevant information in order to make a good occupational choice. It is equally important to obtain adequate, relevant information on educational and training opportunities. This section describes some of the major sources of information.

Basic information about educational and training programs is presented in several reference books such as **University Career, Outlook, Community College Career Outlook, Atlantic Spectrum, Spectrum, and Western Spectrum**. These latter three handbooks describe all post-secondary education in the Atlantic Provinces, Ontario, and the Western Provinces respectively. For example, they list all universities, community colleges, vocational and private trade schools, institutes of technology and apprenticeship programs. Copies of these publications can be found in most libraries, school placement offices and Canada Manpower Centres.

Many professional, union and trade associations are actively engaged in publishing materials about the education or training needed by its members. As well, federal and provincial governments regularly issue publications about educational opportunities. Your school counsellor, Canada Manpower counsellor, or local librarian can help you find and use these publications.

People can be a most useful source of information. For example, you could talk to people associated with various institutions such as registrars and instructors. You could talk to their counsellors and placement officers. You could also talk to present and former students.

A lot of useful information can be obtained by writing directly to different institutions. For example, most of them have calendars and brochures, program description leaflets, school handbooks and

the like. Usually this information is distributed to prospective students free of charge.

Following are some suggestions on what to look for when you are investigating educational opportunities:

1. *The preparation given.* What is the person being prepared for? How is s/he prepared? What is the nature of the preparation program? What happens to students who have finished the program? How long is the program?
2. *The admission policies and practices.* What does it take to get into the program? For example, are certain high school courses required? Is a certain grade point average required? Is it necessary to take admission examinations?
3. *The costs.* How much will it cost a person to obtain the training or further education? As well as finding out about tuition costs, you should also consider living costs, travel expenses and the like.
4. *The student services.* Does it provide any services to students such as counselling and job placement? Does it provide financial assistance to students in the form of loans, scholarships and bursaries? If so, who is eligible for financial assistance?
5. *Awards.* Upon completion, is there a certificate, diploma or degree that is recognized by others as being of merit? For example, is it recognized by other educational institutions? Is it recognized by employers?

There are also many other factors to consider. For example, you should obtain information on the facilities available at an institution, qualifications of faculty members, size and type of student body and so on. But these things become more important after you have made a decision on the type of education and training you are going to take.

## **STAGES IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING**

Educational planning takes place over an extended period of time. In the first stage, you must widely explore the various opportunities available to you. You must find out how each of these options prepares you and what you can do with the preparation.

In the second stage, you must decide upon the particular kind of education and training that is most appropriate for you. For

example, will you take a program at a university, a community college, a technical institute, a vocational school, a private trades school? Will you take an apprenticeship? Will you take on-the-job training? Or will you get a job immediately after finishing high school and try to get further education during evenings and weekends?

Once you have decided upon the specific path you will take, you must choose the place in which you will take your education or training. For example, if you decide to attend university, you will apply to those that appear to offer the best program for you. Throughout these various stages, you will be sorting and weighing a variety of facts about yourself and your opportunities. More specifically, here are some of the things you should consider:

1. *Consider your purpose in going.* You should know what you want from further schooling. For example, do you want a broad form of preparation that will enable you to enter any one of several occupations in your area of interest? Or do you want a form of preparation that will enable you to do a specific job?
2. *Consider whether you enjoy going to school.* Be honest with yourself about further education and training. Do you really like the idea of going to a vocational school, a technical institute or college? Or would you prefer to attend night school while working? If you do not like to study, it might be better for you to work for a few years and then make up your mind about the kind of preparation you will take. A year or more of work experience can often give you a clearer understanding of the advantages of more education and training.
3. *Consider whether you have the ability to succeed in the type of education and or training that interests you.* When you were exploring occupations, you saw that various levels of ability were required. You have also had a chance to estimate your own abilities by reviewing your past performances and taking certain tests. So you should already have some idea about whether you have the ability to succeed in the schooling you need. If you do not, talk to a school counsellor about your abilities and educational plans. S/he may be able to provide some alternative suggestions for you.
4. *Consider the means of financing further education and/or training.* Part of planning your educational development consists of estimating what it is going to cost you. If you and your family do not have sufficient money, you should consult with

financial aid officers in the institutions in which you are interested. Today many institutions provide scholarships, loans, bursaries, grants and part-time work to those students who need financial help.

5. *Consider the particular schools you should attend.* There are many institutions offering similar courses of study. But they vary greatly in quality, reputation, cost and convenience. For example, you could take a chef's course at any one of several schools. The same is true for most areas of post-secondary education. Which institution should you select? Here are some suggestions:
  - A. Go to the school that has the best reputation for the preparation in which you are interested. The best way to obtain information is to talk to people who have attended different institutions and are now out working. Your school counsellor or Canada Manpower counsellor may also be able to provide you with some facts.
  - B. Go to the school that specializes in the particular training you need. For example, there are hundreds of institutions offering secretarial programs. But the differences among institutions offering similar programs may be due to superior instructors, superior facilities, or stricter admission requirements. Choose the school that offers the best training in your field.
  - C. Go to the school that maintains placement services for its graduates. Carefully check an institution's placement service to determine whether its graduates are able to get jobs and if the school assists them in doing so. At the same time, you should be wary of institutions that guarantee to find you a job. They often do not follow through on their promises.
  - D. Consider schools that are conveniently located and that you can afford to attend. Location and cost should not be your only considerations, but they are important ones.

## SUMMARY

Most occupations require training of some sort before a worker is qualified to do the work. Sometimes there is only one way to get that training. Sometimes there may be a number of options from which to choose.

People use many ways to prepare themselves for entry into their chosen occupations. Some attend university. Some attend comm-

unity colleges or technical institutes. Some attend vocational schools or private trade schools. Some enroll in apprenticeship programs. Others take on-the-job training. Still others work at a job full-time and study at night and on weekends. There are advantages and disadvantages with any of these options and you should carefully consider them before you decide on the form of preparation that will be best for you.

Once you have chosen the method you will use to prepare yourself for work, you must explore alternative institutions and programs. Some of the factors you must consider are quality, reputation, cost and convenience. But you must also consider your likelihood of succeeding in the form of preparation that interests you.

















